

OCTOBER 2005

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BUT HIS STRUGGLES WITH
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HIM THE TOOLS TO
BIND A NATION

BY JOSHUA
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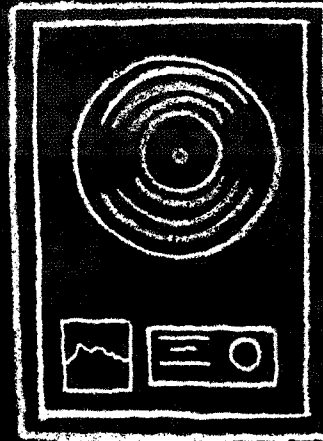
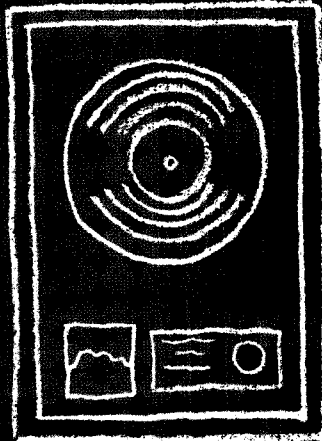
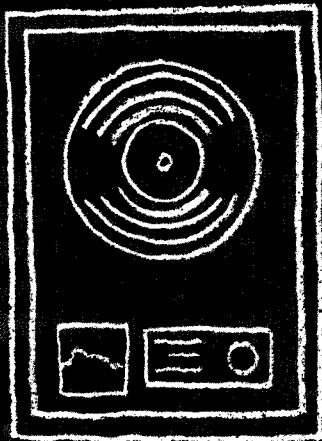


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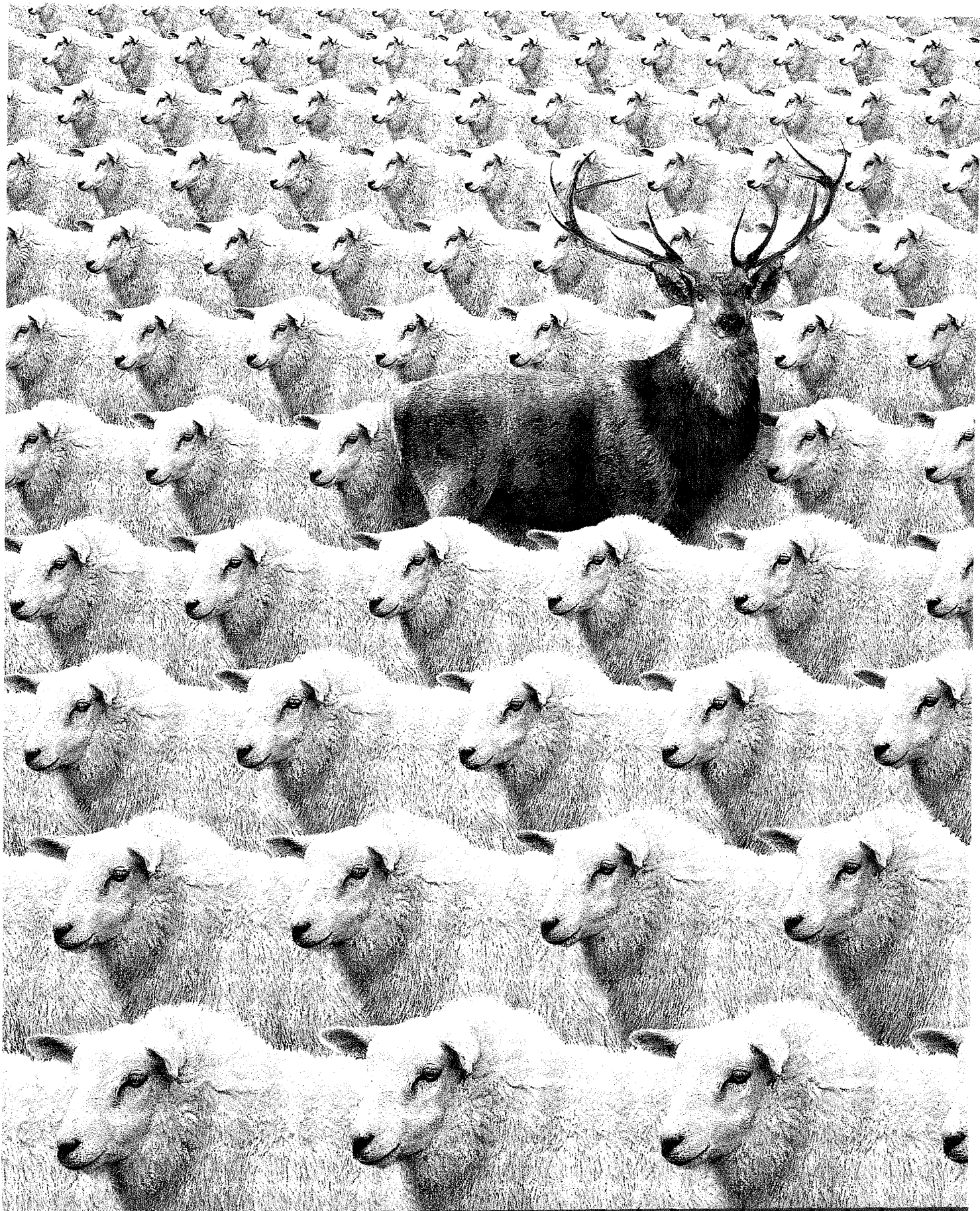
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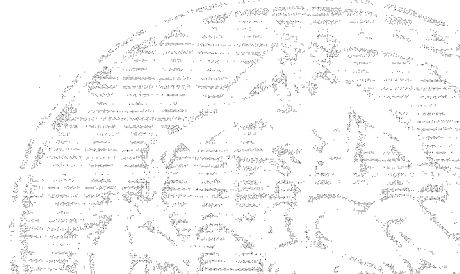
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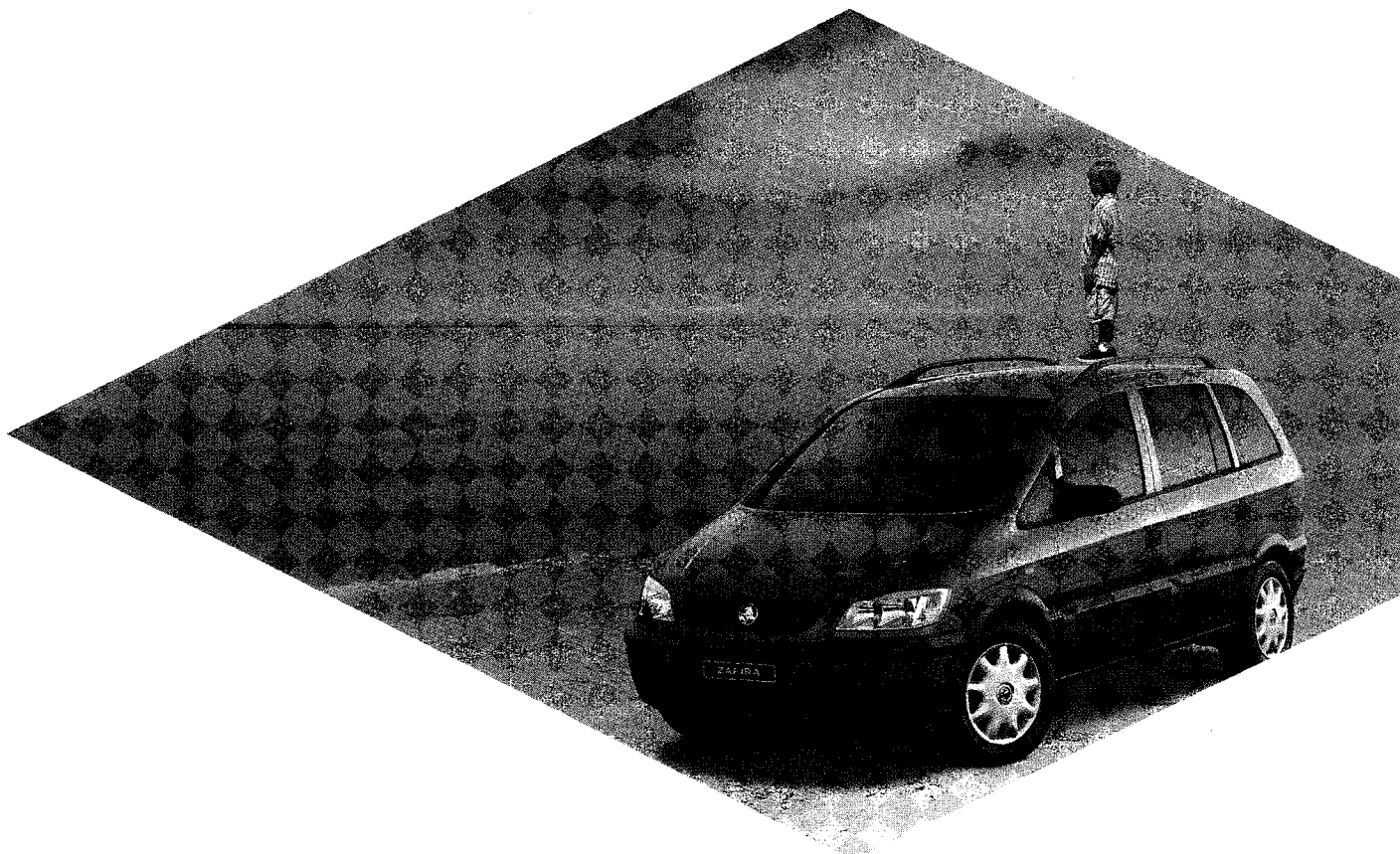
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Cover: Lincoln at the age of forty-nine, by Calvin Jackson, October 1, 1858.
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Online

This month is the 10th anniversary of The Atlantic Online. Here's a look back at the articles from the magazine's print edition that have proved most popular online.

1995 "On Abortion: A Lincolnian Position,"
by *George McKenna*

1995 "Why America Thinks It Has to Run the World,"
by *Benjamin Schwarz*

1997 "My Race Problem—and Ours," by *Randall Kennedy*

1998 "The Prison-Industrial Complex," by *Eric Schlosser*

1999 "What Is the Koran?"
by *Toby Lester*

2000 "Harvard and the Making of the Unabomber,"
by *Alston Chase*

2001 "Bystanders to Genocide,"
by *Samantha Power*

2002 "Tales of the Tyrant,"
by *Mark Bowden*

2003 "The Fall of the House of Saud," by *Robert Baer*

2004 "Blind Into Baghdad,"
by *James Fallows*

2005 "How We Would Fight China," by *Robert D. Kaplan*

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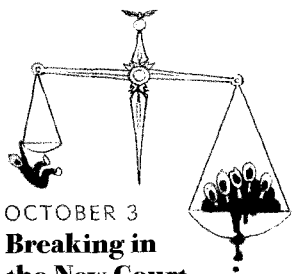
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OCTOBER 3

Breaking in the New Court

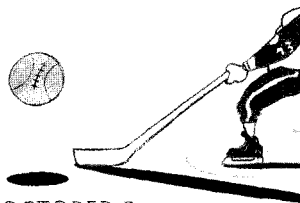
If John Roberts is confirmed, lawyers arguing before the Supreme Court will find themselves in unfamiliar waters when the new session begins today. Sandra Day O'Connor was the swing vote in many cases involving abortion, affirmative action, federalism, and religion, but her retirement makes moot the strategy of tailoring legal arguments to persuade her. A host of contentious cases involving the death penalty, abortion, and gays in the military are on the docket.

OCTOBER 3

It's a Long Way to Brussels

Today Turkey begins negotiations for its long-sought entry into the European Union. Simply getting to this point is a victory of sorts, but Turkey's prospects for membership remain dim. Doubts about admitting its huge, poor, and predominantly Muslim population into the EU played a

role in French voters' recent scuttling of the EU constitution, and the Germans appear similarly skeptical. Under EU rules any member can block admittance, including Turkey's longtime nemesis, Cyprus. The rosiest scenario predicts that Turkish membership is at least ten years off.



OCTOBER 5

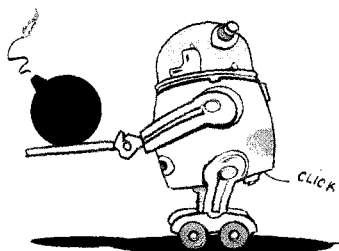
Hockey Returns

Last year hockey became the first North American sport to sacrifice an entire season to a contract dispute, but the National Hockey League returns this week with new rules to spice up what many believe had become an icy tedium. Among the changes: shootouts will decide tie games, and goalies will have less-bulky equipment. The NHL faces an uphill battle: ESPN, long its TV home, has declined to broadcast the season since discovering that some of last year's replacement programming—college basketball and a poker drama—earned higher ratings than hockey.

OCTOBER 8

The Pentagon's Robot Race

Today off-road vehicles built by assorted private companies, academic teams, high school students, and basement tinkerers attempt to steer, unmanned, through 175 miles of obstacle-laden desert in under ten hours, as part of a Pentagon-sponsored contest. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's second annual Grand Challenge is intended to spur the development of autonomous vehicles that will keep soldiers from the peril of navigating battlefields. The prize for the fastest time has been doubled, to \$2 million, although simply completing the course would be impressive enough: in last year's race all fifteen participants flipped, crashed, or foundered in the first seven miles.



CALENDAR

WHAT TO WATCH FOR IN THE WEEKS AHEAD

OCTOBER 15

Unhand That Yuan

The next salvo in the United States' currency fight with China is expected today, when the Treasury Department issues its report to Congress on foreign currency practices. The last report, in May, warned that if China didn't ease its controls on the yuan, which has been pegged to the dollar since 1994, it would be officially branded a "manipulator," triggering U.S. measures to bring its currency back in line. China subsequently severed its currency from the dollar, but critics say the cheapened yuan still unfairly puts the United States in hock to China by keeping the price of Chinese imports artificially low. Two senators have found bipartisan support for a measure that would impose a 27.5 percent tariff on Chinese imports across the board if China does not allow market forces to continue to raise the value of the yuan.

OCTOBER 15

Constitutional Referendum in Iraq

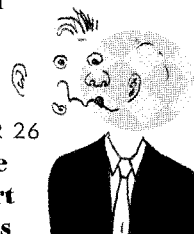
Iraqis are scheduled to head to the polls today to give an up or down vote on a constitution—the second of three votes to establish a sovereign government. If the constitution is approved by more than two thirds of Iraqis, elections for the final government will take place December 15. If it fails, the process will begin again from square one with elections for a new transitional government on the same date. Kurds in the north are con-

cerned about losing regional autonomy under the new government, and influential Sunni leaders remain split on whether to sit out the referendum; Sunnis largely boycotted the first vote, in January.

OCTOBER 19

Korean Stem-Cell Bank Opens

South Korea today increases its global lead in stem-cell research by opening the world's first stem-cell bank, in Seoul. Hwang Woo-suk, the professor behind the bank, last year became the first to successfully clone human embryos and extract stem cells. In August his laboratory announced another breakthrough: the first cloned dog.



OCTOBER 26

Deadline for Smart Passports

Starting today, all new passports from countries whose citizens don't need visas to visit the United States must include digital photos as part of a plan to reduce counterfeiting. (Old passports will still be accepted.) The twenty-seven nations in the visa-waiver program, including most of Europe, must also submit plans to shift to "e-passports," which contain biometric data embedded in a small chip, by this date next year. Critics claim that the chips, which can be read from a short distance, might make it easier for bad guys to snatch identities. —MATTHEW QUIRK



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Meltdown

James Fallows sets forth an interesting tale in attempting to make the case that an economic meltdown looms by 2016 ("Countdown to a Meltdown," July/August *Atlantic*). Yet although the public sector figures prominently in his crystal ball, he doesn't address what might become of wealthy corporate behemoths like Microsoft, Pfizer, and ExxonMobil, all of which have billions of dollars on hand and would presumably weather a meltdown of the scope Fallows describes. Microsoft and Pfizer, in particular, might not even require a well-maintained public infrastructure so long as the Internet survived—which Fallows says it will. And with gas at \$9 a gallon by 2016, ExxonMobil shouldn't do too badly either.

*Jube Shriver
Washington, D.C.*

Although I enjoyed James Fallows's mind-walk through a future economic collapse, I was disappointed to see Fallows bow to Washington convention rather than write clearly and simply about U.S.-Venezuelan relations. The United States is deeply hostile to President Hugo Chavez and has been actively seeking to undermine his rule since he took office.

To portray U.S. complicity in a hypothetical future coup as either paranoia or fabrication by Chavez ignores the history of U.S. policy in the region. The likelier scenario is that such a coup—successful or not—would have been fomented or at least well supported by the United States.

*John Canham-Clyne
New Haven, Conn.*

James Fallows's "Countdown to a Meltdown" is doubly discouraging, first for its detailed portrayal of prospective U.S. economic decline and second because

the major political players in Fallows's scenario ignore environmental threats.

Will the United States become hostage to oil controlled by Hugo Chavez, and will the U.S. dollar lose 50 percent of its value against the Chinese yuan and the Japanese yen, before our president tells us that aggressively developing alternative energy sources and reducing our dependence on imported oil is an urgent matter of national security? Such a commitment from the largest national consumer of oil in the world (until China replaces us) would affect oil-futures markets immediately.

By burning oil and other fossil fuels we are also increasing the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to levels not seen since the days of the dinosaurs. By 2016 the results will be more obvious than they are today. A policy memo to a would-be president in 2016 that ignores this problem will be woefully out of date and out of touch.

Will the United States become a Third World country because we refuse to recognize environmental realities? Remember the people of Easter Island, who built a high culture on a wood-based economy and then (as Jared Diamond describes in his recent book, *Collapse*) consumed their island's every last tree. We owe future generations more than that.

*Bruce E. Johansen
Professor, School of Communication
University of Nebraska
Omaha, Nebr.*

James Fallows paints a riveting scenario of America's looming economic crisis. I want to focus on a few additional factors that could swing the outcome.

On the plus side, the spirit of invention that spawned so much of America's economic power may yield new energy supplies and energy-saving devices that stimulate an economic boom and ease America's reliance on foreign oil. True,

such inventions are increasingly likely to emerge from China and India, but America's inventiveness, combined with its ability to marshal capital in support of technology transfer, could keep the economic dominoes from falling.

On the minus side, Fallows's scenario does not provide for weather catastrophes—earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts, floods—that could further destabilize the American economy and diminish foreign investment. Another swing factor is infectious disease, and here Fallows makes reference to avian flu. Let us hope that those who reread this article in 2016 can smile on this reference as a possibility that failed to materialize.

Fallows predicts that a year's tuition at a private college will double in another decade. However, the endowments of the wealthiest colleges should still be sufficient to offset tuition increases and provide need-based scholarships for talented students. Fallows's scenario reinforces the belief that college endowments should be used in part to keep prime educational opportunities available even in the face of harsh economic headwinds.

*William E. Cooper
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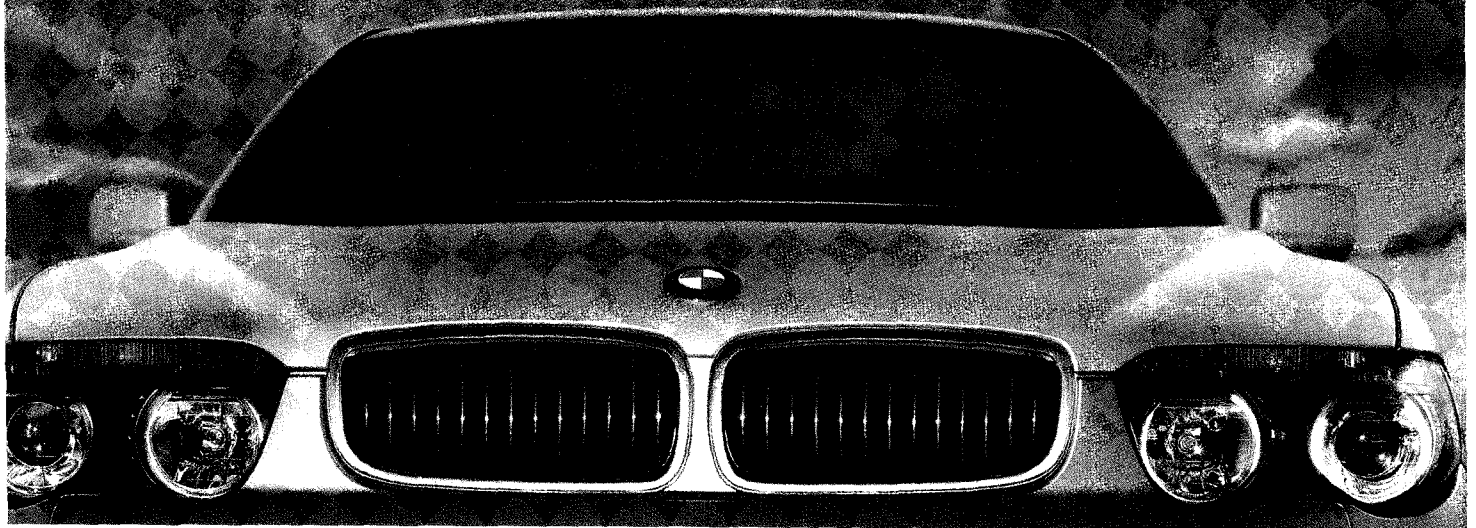
North Korea

In discussing the Agreed Framework of 1994, Scott Stossel ("North Korea: The War Game," July/August *Atlantic*) mentions that the United States, South Korea, and Japan were to supply North Korea with light-water nuclear reactors, among other items. He goes on to say that "congressional Republicans attacked the agreement, calling it 'appeasement'"—and that the North Koreans eventually cheated on it. This does not do justice to the history of that situation.

Stossel could have made it much clearer how we landed in our current



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dire straits had he noted that congressional Republicans did much more than “attack” the agreement rhetorically—they blocked every attempt to make the appropriations required to construct those light-water reactors and slowed the approval of appropriations that were necessary to finance many of the other items that constituted our end of the bargain. The fact is that those reactors never got built.

Stossel might have further noted that the North Koreans did not begin cheating on the agreement until nearly four years later—after it probably became clear to them (as it did to the rest of us who have followed the situation) that the United States would fail to fulfill its part of the bargain as long as Congress was controlled by blindly ideological Republicans. Only after George W. Bush was elected president and effectively blew off the agreement did North Korea again become belligerent.

It’s certainly possible that the North Koreans would have cheated on the agreement anyway. But it’s also possible that they would have abided by it. It would have cost us only about \$15 billion to find out. That’s less than what the federal government has spent to bail out the major U.S. air carriers—about \$3.00 per taxpayer.

*Steven Charles Warren
Waldoboro, Maine*

Americans who are curious as to why Europeans and others are wary of U.S. foreign policy will find the answer in Scott Stossel’s article. Although it purported to be a simulation of genuine government discussions, huge areas of the subject were just left out—namely, the politics (or, as one might say, real life).

No one talked about what the people of South Korea or any other U.S. allies in the region, real or potential, might think about American decisions. No one appeared to understand the broader history surrounding the issue. Nor did anyone analyze the structure of the North Korean regime, which was seen as a homogeneous tyranny of bad guys.

We all know that life is much more complex than that. Yet Stossel is keen to convince us that this is how the U.S. government makes its decisions, and to

“draw conclusions” from this little exercise. If he’s correct, America’s allies are right to be nervous.

*David Wilson
London, England*

I haven’t slept at all well since reading the conclusions of your panel regarding the future of North Korea. With the fate of so many hanging in the balance, and the Bush administration doing—in my opinion and the opinion of your panel—so little right in tackling the North Korean threat, I’d like to offer another option that, oddly, seems not to have been considered by your team of experts.

What if we were nice to the North Koreans? What if we helped to feed their starving millions, and treated the North Korean people with respect, and calmed their fears by listening to them? Let’s not just sign the peace treaty; let’s launch the biggest Peace Corps— or Marshall Plan-type operation ever—people to people, in the streets and fields, not across a negotiating table. I know it sounds like a plan from the Pollyanna School of Foreign Policy, but all other options are regularly ruining my beauty sleep. Maybe a little old-fashioned humanity on a large scale is our only hope. Come to think of it, it might just work in Muslim nations, too.

*Ted Scheu
Middlebury, Vt.*

I was halfway through Scott Stossel’s discussion of the North Korea war game when I noticed the absence of South Korea. Shouldn’t a South Korean have been invited to the game? After all, a war with North Korea would be fought in South Korea and involve lots of South Korean casualties. None of the panelists noted this surprising omission.

The war game also ignored the financial aspect of such a conflict. As James Fallows showed in the same issue, in his article about the future of the U.S. economy, we finance our trade and budget deficits with foreign borrowing, especially from Asia. After a pre-emptive war in Korea, would the Chinese keep lending us all their savings? Would the South Koreans do so if they suffered the 100,000 casualties mentioned in the war game, and had to deal with refugees

and rebuilding the North? We might prevail in this conflict only to suffer higher interest rates, inflation, and a severe recession.

All in all, these defense intellectuals look like the sort who got us into Vietnam and Iraq.

*Harry I. Potter
Roseville, Calif.*

Perhaps the most interesting thing about Scott Stossel’s article was what was left unsaid, including the following:

1. The defense of South Korea in any war, and the liberation, occupation, and rehabilitation of North Korea, would primarily be the responsibility of the South Korean army, which is large and well trained. The South Koreans speak the same language; they are often related to North Koreans; and they have more interest than anyone else in resolving the situation and reuniting. This South Korean role would reduce any commitment of money and land forces by the United States and other allies. It would also increase the success of efforts to stop rogue exports of remaining North Korean atomic, biological, and chemical weapons and experts.

2. As a highly developed nation with many nuclear reactors, Japan might well be able to develop atomic weapons within months, if not sooner. Japan also has reliable means of delivering them. Whatever weapons North Korea has, its means of delivering them seem suspect.

3. The current U.S. administration has avoided engagement on North Korea, either out of principle or because it prefers an easy target such as Iraq, with its oil. There may be yet another reason. The United States has developed an enormous trade deficit with China, largely financed by the Chinese state banks’ ownership of U.S. debt. This has limited U.S. ability to pressure China into applying the rule of law or allowing its currency to float to its natural level. Chinese state banks also have enormous amounts of non-performing loans. If those loans start to be called in, the consequences for the U.S. and world economies would be devastating. Might the U.S. government have already reached an understanding with the Chinese that

The colonial me *built this nation with his sweat,*

read scripture by candlelight,

sang praises to his true master.

He beat foot trails under the moon

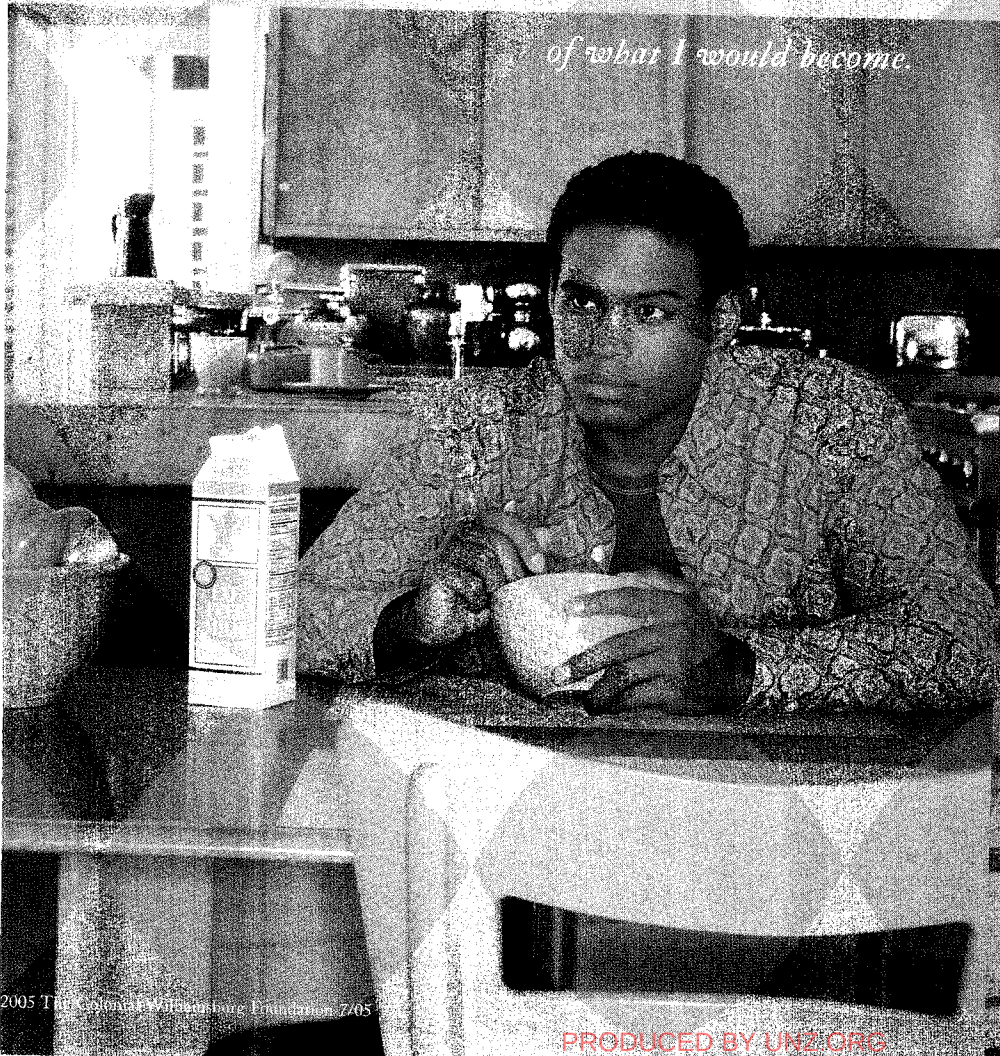
to visit his wife and child,

carrying with him a hand-carved toy,

a coin or two,

and the hope

of what I would become.



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in return for lack of U.S. pressure on economic policy and other issues, the Chinese will pressure the North Koreans or, if worst comes to worst, use military force against them? After all, the Chinese have a lot to gain, strategically and economically, from such a tacit alliance. Whether a Chinese occupation of North Korea is in anyone's interest is another matter.

Anders I. Ourom
Vancouver, British Columbia

Scott Stossel replies:

David Wilson, Harry Potter, and Anders Ourom all mention something that was also pointed out by military observers and other experts who witnessed the war game: the conspicuous lack of concern for (or even discussion of) the interests of the South Korean people. During the actual war game Jessica Mathews did—some time into the proceedings—note this omission, pointing out how strange it was that the panel was discussing whether we could countenance the destruction of Seoul without reference to how the South Koreans themselves might feel. Surely the limitations of the war-game format were

partly responsible—in the short time available to discuss myriad issues and scenarios, inevitably some important topics (including the broader historical context, as Mr. Wilson points out) were left aside. Still, it was striking how little the participants discussed the South Koreans—whether as victims of a nuclear assault, as co-combatants in a ground war, or as potential troops in a postwar peacekeeping operation. Perhaps this does indicate a certain myopia on the part of the American foreign-policy establishment.

Paul Wolfowitz

How could Mark Bowden have interviewed Paul Wolfowitz (of all people!) at length (“Wolfowitz: The Exit Interviews,” July/August *Atlantic*) without pressing him for the real reasons for our going to war in Iraq? In their “wide-ranging” discussions much is made of the iniquities of Saddam Hussein, the WMD issue, and the vagaries of strategic intelligence. But nothing is said of the obvious long-term advantages to the United States of installing a friendly

government in that oil-rich and strategically located country. To say nothing of Israel's security interests. Or the domestic political gains for the Bush administration. Either Mark Bowden was taken for a ride or he hopes to do as much for readers of *The Atlantic*.

Dick Sundt
Orléans, France

Iwish the editors to know that I subscribed to *The Atlantic* specifically because I was so positively impressed by one article: Mark Bowden's interview with Paul Wolfowitz. It really stands out as a piece of objective, balanced, and fair-minded journalism, neither pulling its punches nor following any particular party line.

James D. Woolery
Napa, Calif.

Christopher Hitchens

Iread and reread Christopher Hitchens's review of Lawrence Rainey's *The Annotated Waste Land With Eliot's Contemporary Prose* (“A Breath of Dust,”

Remember
measles?

Remember
rubella?

July/August *Atlantic*) without being able to discern what Hitchens thought of Rainey's book or why he feels that Eliot's poem is "the most overrated ... in the Anglo-American canon."

In astoundingly contradictory fashion Hitchens knocks Eliot and Pound for the Cumaean Sybil, whose presence somehow "robs the poem" of its "claim ... to modernity," though he previously suggested that Eliot was in fact too reliant on the daily minutiae of recent events, a mere "Columbus of the near-at-hand." (It is, I suppose, ironic that Hitchens should borrow a phrase from Saul Bellow in order to lambaste a poet he chides for continual quoting from other sources.) If the topical references don't grab him and classical ones don't either, one wonders what Hitchens would have had Eliot describe.

The realization that Eliot was going through a bad patch with his marriage, Hitchens tells us, is crucial to any understanding of the poem. This is arguably true; at least I don't think anyone with more than a cursory knowledge of the work is unaware that the dialogue in the

"Game of Chess" sequence is thought to represent a conversation between the poet and his wife. And while it is odd that Rainey's book fails to mention Madison Cawein's *Waste Land*, which may have inspired Eliot's title and much of the opening stanzas of his own poem, a comparison shows us pretty clearly that a general idea of something, however interesting, is not to be mistaken for its realization. To put it bluntly, if Cawein was there first, Eliot was there better.

Hitchens wonders why "a pious Christian" like Eliot should feel "impelled to exhaust himself in the invocation of darkness and despair." Whatever the answer may be, a glance over the writings of his near contemporaries suggests that Eliot had a lot of company. Hilaire Belloc, J. K. Huysmans, G. K. Chesterton, and Evelyn Waugh (who quoted *The Waste Land* frequently) all made an initial reputation for nightmarish satire before retreating into a not always convincing nook of Catholicism. Regardless of one's beliefs, is it really so surprising that those who have gazed into the bottomless pit might retreat toward faith?

Hitchens is eager to take Eliot's later dismissal of the poem as a damning indictment of it. In fact, Eliot's second thoughts may be nothing more than an aging Catholic artist's refutation of his earlier pagan work. A similar thing befell Aubrey Beardsley, who found God during his final illness and spent his last pathetic days imploring his friends to destroy all his "ungodly" pictures. Were we to base our estimations of art solely on what the artists themselves thought at any given moment, our experience of art would be grossly circumscribed.

Strangest of all, apart from a pair of tacked-on jibes at the end of the essay, Hitchens never really gets around to telling us what irks him about the poem. "What critic," he asks, "has ever succeeded in getting any sense or any beauty out of the final pages?" Well, if you're not going to bother with specific criticisms, the *ad verecundiam* question deserves an *ad verecundiam* reply: I, personally, have never had any trouble getting plenty of beauty and sense out of those pages.

Hitchens's other gripe—"In what con-

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ceivable universe . . . is April the cruelest month?"—is right up there in its freakish literal-mindedness with Kingsley Amis's bizarre reading of the opening verses of Poe's "To Helen," where he mocks Poe for comparing Helen's face to "a lot of broken down old boats" (sic). This is a bit like claiming that Picasso was a bad painter because he put both eyes on one side of the nose in that portrait.

Clarity, directness, and full integration of purpose are qualities laudable in statesmen and the journalists who report on them. They are not, however, necessarily the most important aspects of poetry. Language in art can be valued for other, less immediate reasons. Because something is obscure or partial does not make it untrue.

David V. Griffin
Esopus, N.Y.

I should say this right off: Eliot makes me grumpy too. I always start my undergraduate survey of modern American poetry with whoever happens to be the U.S. poet laureate at the time and work backward toward Eliot, with the overt intention of loosening the stranglehold he continues to have on poetry in the academy and the covert hope that I'll never get to the misogynistic, anti-Semitic, fascist-leaning, England-worshiping old genius at all. But somehow, come the last weeks of class, I always do, and thus my sophomores and juniors learn some of the following:

1. Eliot's choice of title for *The Waste Land* was not a theft from but an homage to the music-hall/burlesque tradition from which the poem grew. *The Waste Land* was originally titled *He Do the Police in Different Voices*. It was a savage comic satire. Hitchens claims that Madison Cawein, the American author of a poem called *Waste Land* (published in *Poetry* magazine), a "Kentucky blues man and a barroom versifier," was "as distant from Eliot, in poetic terms, as it was possible to be." Plain wrong. Pound's editing disguised the barroom-style origins of Eliot's poem, though not entirely: one of the best-loved sections of the poem, Lil's monologue, takes place in a bar and retains the comic edge of the original version.

2. In Pound, Eliot was blessed with a

superb editor. Far from making changes for the worse, as Hitchens asserts, Pound—surprisingly enough—cut the original satire in the direction of conciseness, tact, and restraint.

3. Biography is interesting and sometimes helpful in coping with a poem. But the job of a poem is not to serve as biography. Hitchens seems miffed that Pound, by editing out some of the misogyny, excised lines that are "essential to an understanding of Eliot" and have "a very direct connection to the distraught marital relations that, among many other pressures, kept his nerves on a knife edge while he was composing the poem." Truly, Hitchens is the first reviewer I have ever known to assert that the purpose of an artwork is to serve up the artist's backstory.

4. *The Waste Land* is flat-out gorgeous. Its despair is the florid luxury of a writer at the end of his youth: he was thirty-eight at the time of its publication, and the poem almost smells like teen spirit, to borrow a line, which is why so many undergraduates love it even without their teachers' telling them to. Hitchens's rhetorical question "What critic has ever succeeded in getting any sense or any beauty out of the final pages?" has an easy answer: dozens. Shouldn't Hitchens have read some of them?

5. That there really was a song called "The Shakespearian (sic) Rag" (a few lines of which Eliot paraphrased) is announced in one of *The Waste Land*'s famous footnotes as far back as the 1988 Ellman and O'Clair edition of *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. Hitchens says that he found this tidbit "astonishingly interesting to discover" in the 2005 book under his scrutiny.

6. Eliot is literally accurate (as well as metaphorically sound—for the depressed, at least) in saying that "April is the cruelest month," a statement that Hitchens believes couldn't be true in any "conceivable universe"—"even the batty, sinister one of Ezra Pound." It is certainly true in the universe of the university, where evidence both hard and anecdotal shows that traffic to the counseling center is particularly intense during that month.

Clarinda Harris
*Towson University
Baltimore, Md.*

Many years ago (in the 1950s, I think) Professor William Troy entered the New School auditorium, on 12th Street in New York, to give his annual lecture on T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Since he was a favored scholar in that little world at the time, the silence was appalling; we knew he would read the entire poem before explaining it to us, and that alone would make being there worthwhile. He staggered slightly as he neared the podium, but there was only a moment's pause before he began to read. "April," he said sonorously, "is the cruelest month." I was very young; if I had somehow been sent back to ancient Greece to witness a performance of a play by Euripides, I could not have been more impressed.

After he read the poem, banging the last "shantih" with a dental *z*, he began to interpret the poem line by line. "Why," he asked, "is April the cruelest month?" We had all been wondering. He gazed at us sympathetically, and then he said, "Statistics appear to show that! There are more suicides in April than in any other month." A buzz of astonishment greeted this remark. Ancient Greece fell away at that moment, and the rest of the afternoon does not appear in my memory.

Many such things were said about the poem, and it is hard to blame the critics; it was their business to take almost everything seriously. But Hitchens is wrong to make fun of that opening, because the first two sentences are the only ones that make a bit of sense in terms of the all-but-missing logic the poem has; they introduce us to the medieval land of the Fisher King, the one who has suffered a grievous wound to his middle, as a consequence of which the land has been infertile for years or maybe decades. In April, when the snow begins to melt and the winter that kept us warm begins to wane, one can see again that the dead land will not bear, breeding only lilacs out of it and a few dried tubers. From that logical beginning it's . . . "Marie! Marie! Hold on tight!" and down we go.

Why the poem had such a grip on several generations perhaps only the sociologists can figure out—something to do, perhaps, with that war we lived

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through but, too young, did not participate in; the atomic bombs (both of them) that fell on Japan; our shared fright that there wasn't much time left. The poem had so much sheer, booming resonance, stated in such immaculate periods, that it didn't seem to matter much that no one could understand it. But then, there was *Prufrock*. Wasn't there?

Matthew Held
Longmont, Colo.

I quite enjoyed Christopher Hitchens's Essay on Mikhail Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* ("A Doomed Young Man," June *Atlantic*). But I was surprised that Hitchens neglected to mention a couple of other literary legacies of Lermontov's semi-autobiographical "hero."

Not only is Pechorin a kind of forerunner of *oblomovshchina*, the literary movement of the "superfluous man," named for the "hero" of Ivan Goncharov's novel *Oblomov*, but Ian Fleming slyly cited Pechorin as an influence on the development of his greatest creation, James Bond, when he had M tell 007 in *From Russia With Love* that Tatiana Romanova, a clerk in the Soviet Union's Ministry of State Security, fell in love with him after reading its file on him, because he "reminded her of the hero of a book by some Russian fellow called Lermontov."

Ron Dingman
Pontiac, Mich.

Infidelity

Could Cristina Nehring ("Fidelity City With a Wandering Eye," July/August *Atlantic*) please share the phone numbers of those wild, lascivious lady tramps? I rather have a feeling that they are like space aliens: you hear and read an awful lot about them, but you never seem to meet one in person!

Nehring's article strongly implies that women have a sex drive and that it is equal to or greater than that of men. Speaking from thirty-five years of practical experience, I can say with certainty that nothing could be further from the truth. Of course women do have sex, but not just for the sake of having sex, as men do. Rather, women use sex

to get something else they want. Generally what women want is one of the three *Ms*: money, monogamy, or marriage (in which case the sex comes to a screeching halt as soon as the wedding cake is cut).

The litmus test that manifests the vast difference in the sexual appetites of men and women lies in the question: How many times have you turned down opportunities to have sex (especially of the opportunistic, one-nighter variety)? On this question the "sex drive" of a woman can be fairly described as "No, No, Nanette."

David Colbert
Oklahoma City, Okla.

Cristina Nehring's summation of evolutionary psychology and what she perceives as its general insult to women is oversimplified and inaccurate. According to Nehring, evolutionary psychologists would have it that "girls are made to sit in the straw and warm their eggs; guys are made to fly through the heavens and spread their seed." Many evolutionary psychologists do indeed suggest that evolution favored men who indiscriminately spread their seed, but their explications of that selection process certainly do not use the exalted language of Nehring's account. Evolutionary psychologists also explore how mental dispositions such as the human conscience evolved and balanced out the uglier aspects of the sex drive. Eminent thinkers in the field, such as Robert Wright, Daniel Dennett, Martin Seligman, and Steven Pinker, spend a good deal of time laying out the complex workings of the mind, and they all seem quite forward-thinking in their views on gender and sexuality. I suspect that all these writers would agree wholeheartedly with Nehring's conclusion that we are "erotic and emotional animals," and that sharing those inclinations with our partners will enrich our intimate relations. Understanding our animal nature is what evolutionists do, and they offer wise counsel about overcoming the uglier aspects of it. Nehring dismisses them too readily and unfairly.

Scott Parsons
Kent, Ohio

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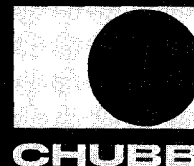
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Cristina Nehring replies:

David Colbert is unfooled by all the malarkey about female libido. He has thirty-five years of celibacy to prove it's a lie. How often, he demands, have "you" had casual sex? At the risk of appearing to speak for others, I'll answer: Never.

But women have dangerous sex; intemperate sex; ill-judged, emotionally explosive, quixotic, and predictably disastrous sex. It's casual sex that is the oxymoron.

Overgeneralizing is as risky as undergeneralizing is dull. But the point of my article was this: Sex is important to women. Love is important to women. It's for precisely this reason that they—that we—are more easily disappointed by it, more often driven (as statistics now show) to leave marriages, to start over, to search further.

There are, of course, members of my gender who bed their neighbors as lightly and brightly as Colbert would wish—even if they do not choose to do so with him. But for many women sex at its best means something more than itself—though it does not necessarily or even frequently mean marriage and security. If it did, there would be no Anna Kareninas or Madame Bovarys. And there are a hell of a lot of Anna Kareninas and Madame Bovarys. One could even say they are the quintessential female type of the modern novel—indeed, of the modern age.

Sex for women is adventure. Or it is illumination. Or it is suspense. Or it is love. Or it is life change. High expectations bring high rates of disillusionment. It is for this reason that women are not only often more vulnerable than their male counterparts but also more volatile. And this despite the claims of evolutionary psychologists, as mentioned by Scott Parsons.

It's not that I discount the testimony of the specialists he cites; it is merely that I believe, as Hamlet said, that "there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in our philosophy"—or in our psychology, Mr. Parsons. As for putting this testimony into language other than that which the specialists would use themselves, I should hope I do! It is one of the few liberties (and duties) of a writer to put hazy consensuses into words more arresting—and more compromising—than do those who pass them off.

Death Shortage

Charles C. Mann's "The Coming Death Shortage" (May *Atlantic*) was dismayingly typical of our society's hostility to old people who seek to prolong their lives.

First, Mann is undoubtedly correct that many middle-aged adults are eager for their parents to kick off and leave them a windfall. I urge every old person to ask himself, "What is a better use of my hard-earned money—to keep myself alive or to provide riches to adult children who have done nothing to earn them and who are so selfish and so unloving toward me that they value my money more than my life?" Moreover, if Mann is so concerned about inequity, he should be more critical of inheritances, surely a major source of economic inequity in our society.

Mann's views about longevity and the workplace trap the elderly in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" scenario. If they retire, they raise the "dependency ratio" of retirees to workers. If they hold on to their jobs, they are "blocking the door" to opportunities for the young—and are "usually less productive." But a society that is technologically advanced enough to greatly extend longevity is apt to be able to extend health and productivity as well. And tying employment to productivity rather than to seniority is a more humane way of increasing job opportunities for the deserving than is condemning the elderly to unnecessarily early death.

Mann's view that it is "fundamental to human existence" that "every quarter century or so children take over from their parents" should be seen in light of other things that have been considered fundamental to human existence, such as slavery and the subjugation of women. Progress means change.

*Felicia Nimue Ackerman
Professor of Philosophy
Brown University
Providence, R.I.*

Charles Mann doesn't consider the impact of technology that will allow our minds to survive death. Grandma may die at age 132 in 2097 but live on in a device that has recorded her memories and thought patterns. She may down-

load herself into a new body. She may transfer abridged versions of herself into the minds of those heirs willing to put up with an added voice in their heads in return for a share of her wealth. It sounds like cheap science fiction, but in the next 100 to 150 years we will figure out how consciousness works—how the brain gives rise to the mind—and we will replicate this process. Our laws and philosophies will change. We will need to redefine what makes a person and determine the rights of transferred minds.

Mann worries that the undying old will squeeze out the young. But a world of portable minds will be more turbulent than a simple gerontocracy. The old will turn themselves into the young. The young will buy plug-in chunks of experience. And amid the tumult we will begin to defeat the wastefulness of mortality, whereby each death wipes out a lifetime of knowledge, wisdom, and emotional ties.

Rick Rosner
Studio City, Calif.

Charles C. Mann replies:

Felicia Ackerman says that my views "trap the elderly in a 'damned if you do, damned if you don't' scenario." Actually, these are not my views so much as the views of economists whom I quoted. But I suspect that "tying employment to productivity," as Ackerman suggests, would not resolve the dilemma they perceive. A sudden increase in the pool of potential workers will lead to more competition for employment, no matter how jobs are awarded. As for her larger point, the world indeed changed when life expectancy climbed from forty-seven to seventy-seven. Although the change was wonderful for most individuals, the resulting population boom is widely believed to have played a role in the twentieth century's appalling record of war and environmental calamity. The point of my article is that most economists who have pondered the consequences of a continued increase in lifespan believe there will again be a downside.

An older society is not necessarily an unhealthier one. I guess this would be even more true if Rick Rosner were correct that we will soon be able to download ourselves into new bodies. One can only imagine the frustration of the younger generation, though, if that came to pass.

Polygamy Reconsidered

Mark Steyn's column on Owen Allred ("The Marrying Kind," May *Atlantic*) perpetuates an unfortunate stereotype. Members of the group most commonly known as Mormons—the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints—are forbidden to practice polygamy, and have been since Wilford L. Woodruff, president of the church in 1890, issued what is now known as "Official Declaration 1." OD-1 is treated as scripture by the LDS Church, and is in fact included in the scriptures sold by the church's printing-and-distribution service.

As Steyn points out, Allred was excommunicated from the LDS Church in 1942. At that point, by definition, Allred ceased to be a Mormon, and it's misleading to label him as such.

Paul Robichaux
Perrysburg, Ohio

For many people in the world, polygamy is no laughing matter but an accepted form of marriage. Americans need to learn that the customs of "the others" have been adopted for good reasons, which need to be discovered before a custom is condemned or sneered at.

Traditional polygamy is clearly superior to the "serial polygamy" practiced in the West, in which each successive wife is cast out, often with her children, to fend for herself. The situation of the first wife in a polygamous marriage is a good deal more secure and emotionally satisfying than that, and she is spared the psychological and social trauma of divorce.

Rev. Mtumiki Njira
Derdepark, South Africa

Advice & Consent

According to Wayne McNulty (Letters, July/August *Atlantic*), a quick search on the Internet suggests that France gives citizenship to anyone born in the country. No. My husband was born in Morocco, at the time a French dependency; I'm American; and our children were born in France. We've spent the past six months, as we try to get our children's French identity cards renewed, trying to find proof that at

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least two of their ancestors were born in France. This is because of the so-called “Pasqua Laws,” which were passed to prevent North African immigrants’ children from automatically becoming French. On the other hand, my children are American because I’m American; and after being declared at the American embassy in Paris, they have been treated as American citizens. I agree with Christopher Hitchens (“On Becoming American,” May *Atlantic*)—the United States is generous in awarding citizenship.

*Alison Maraillet
Chambéry, France*

The best part of my flight to California this summer was that I was able to buy a copy of the August fiction issue at the newsstand. I was reminded yet again of how much I miss the fiction in my favorite monthly magazine. Please, please consider bringing it back! It seems a tease, a torturous whetting of the appetite, to have articles about “good fiction writing” and book reviews on good fiction writers, and yet no actual *fiction*!

We’ve been readers of *The Atlantic* for almost seven years now, and don’t plan to give up our subscription, because we love the magazine. But we sorely miss the bit of fancy and escape that the short stories provided.

*Araceli Jonsson
Sugar Land, Texas*

Any article describing the virtues of kosher beef that does not address the long-standing controversy regarding methods of restraining cattle for ritual slaughter is incomplete at best (“The Kosher Conversion,” by Corby Kummer, May *Atlantic*).

Although there have been great advances in recent years, kosher (and also Islamic) slaughter has long involved very great cruelty, despite ancient laws that mandate humane treatment. Jewish and Islamic leaders have successfully argued that laws forcing compliance with humane-slaughter regulations would interfere with religious freedom. Critics of cruel religious-slaughter practices have sometimes been accused of anti-Semitism.

The problem has its roots in the col-

lision between well-meaning civil sanitary laws, which require that an animal be suspended—“shackled” by a chain around a hind leg—before it is bled out, and ancient, well-meaning religious rules against the slaughter (by bleeding) of an unconscious animal. Humane-slaughter regulations require that the animal be stunned before shackling. Cattle shackled for religious slaughter while fully conscious, terrorized and in great pain, often struggle violently. This is particularly the case with the heavy bulls favored by religious buyers; a federal inspector once told me he could not understand how, given the animals’ wild struggles, the shackled legs of some bulls and oxen did not pull off! A worker told me that some animals suffocated from the weight of their paunch on their lungs before they could be safely approached.

While it is evident that modern humane restraint systems—particularly the one designed by Temple Grandin—have greatly reduced shackling in American kosher plants, I am told by cattle dealers that it is still practiced in some older facilities. Shackling is also reportedly standard in South American kosher plants that export beef to the United States and elsewhere. Since only the forequarters are used for kosher purposes, much meat from ritually slaughtered animals goes into the general beef supply.

Since age eight I have raised and had slaughtered, as humanely as I could arrange, many head of cattle. Most of the animals I have liked as individuals, and not a few I have loved. (I have worked in the woods with oxen who sometimes had a better idea of how to accomplish a task than I did.) And while I strenuously object to the way cattle are too often mistreated, I reject as well the logic of extreme animals’ rightists who, in effect, would rid the world of these wonderful creatures.

*William Bunting
Whitefield, Maine*

Correction

The last photo in the series by Christopher Morris (Photo Op, July/August Atlantic) was incorrectly identified as depicting a scene in Washington, D.C. The location was Omaha, Nebraska.

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Sources: US Senate Drug Importation Hearings: Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee, May 20, 2004 and Judiciary Committee, July 14, 2004;
U.S. Food and Drug Administration: "FDA Test Results of Prescription Drugs from Bogus Canadian Website Show All Products Are Fake or Substandard", July 13, 2004.
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THE AGENDA

OCTOBER 2005 | THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

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COMMENT

Does Oil Have a Future?

Even the industry has its doubts

BY CLIVE CROOK

The energy bill that emerged from Congress this past summer could be the last of its kind. Certainly it ought to be. Missing the point at such an inordinate expense of effort, words, and dollars is plain bad government.

At only a little under 2,000 pages, the new legislation is exhausting but, surprisingly, by no means exhaustive. Somewhere in the vast spaces of the Energy Policy Act, you might think, room could have been found for actions that actually addressed the two main energy-policy challenges of the next decade: global warming and the national-security implications of dependence on imported oil. But no, the authors of this purportedly comprehensive law mostly chose to concentrate on other issues. Severely pressed for time (remember, they had been working on this for years), they had urgent battles to win on subsidies and tax breaks for their respective energy-producing constituencies.

None of this is new, admittedly. Energy bills have been that way for as long as anybody can remember. So why are things likely to be different when the *next* energy bill gets written? Because, for the first time, economics and politics are starting to align to that end.

Economics starts with the price of oil. When this sits at around \$50 a barrel or higher—and, more important, is expected to stay there—ambitious efforts to conserve the stuff look attractive. Businesses and consumers economize. Firms invest in oil-saving technologies, including new fuels. Oil producers respond as well, adding to refining capacity (the chief bottleneck of late), spending more on exploration, and, as the frontier of profitable extraction advances, bringing previously marginal sources on-stream. In the past demand and supply have both responded to higher prices even more powerfully than expected.

This raises the question whether future increases in price will merely be curbed, or whether the price might even drop sharply again—say, to \$20 a barrel or less. In such a strange nonmarket this is always possible. At the moment, oil traders are contemplating the potentially awesome appetites of China and India, and betting against it.

The prospect of expensive oil for the foreseeable future, and the risk that the price will go far higher yet, have put the industrial economies, including the United States, in the mood to save oil.

What is interesting is that thanks to shifting politics, this is no longer regarded as bad news. Moderating America's thirst for oil

HUNDRED-DOLLAR OIL

Where do you think oil prices will be next year? Go ahead, pick a number—any number—and you can probably find an expert somewhere who agrees with you. Andy Xie, the chief Asian economist for Morgan Stanley, says oil prices are about to collapse—recent prices of about \$60 a barrel are far too high to last. The oil analyst Matthew Simmons says hogwash—we'll soon be paying \$100 a barrel. Other pundits have staked out much of the wide real estate between those predictions.

Talk is cheap. But through two types of contracts—futures and options—traders on the New York Mercantile Exchange do more than talk: they bet daily on whether (and how much) oil's price will rise or fall by certain dates. By putting the information from options and futures together, one can come up with the probabilities that the market is assigning to oil's hitting any given price in June of next year.

So what does the smart money—or at least the money—say? The probabilities appear below. They indicate



Price in June
of 2006

Probability

Less than \$30	2%
\$30–\$40	10%
\$40–\$50	19%
\$50–\$60	21%
\$60–\$70	17%
\$70–\$80	12%
\$80–\$90	8%
\$90–\$100	5%
Above \$100	6%

that right now the future price of oil is virtually impossible to predict, even for experts. That's not unusual: oil prices have often darted up and down unexpectedly, and a variety of factors—including the political instability of the Middle East and the uncertain future of Chinese oil demand—are making prices especially volatile today. Of course,

individual investors can take or leave risky bets on future oil prices. The U.S. economy, on the other hand, has no choice but to continue playing a very high-stakes game. —JAMES HAMILTON

James Hamilton is a professor of economics at the University of California at San Diego. He writes on current economic conditions at www.econbrowser.com.

is widely seen nowadays as a good thing, regardless of price. Security is one reason. Dependence on imported oil exposes America to political risk in the most turbulent part of the world. Whatever one's views about the war in Iraq—or about 9/11, for that matter—oil dependence is part of what lies behind those events, and the connection is widely understood. Geopolitical types, including some from the right, increasingly want to pursue energy efficiency, and oil efficiency in particular, as a matter of national security.

These voices are now oddly in harmony with those of environmentalists, mostly on the left, who are calling for drastic measures to curb emissions of greenhouse gases. The science of global warming is nothing like as settled as the environmental movement's spokesmen and media followers would have people believe: projections of future warming are still uncertain, and exactly what one ought to do about greenhouse-gas emissions, even if those uncertainties go away, would be hard to say. Nonetheless, a political alliance of greens and geostrategists has formed, and continues to grow, around the idea that America must use less oil.

It is telling that many oil and other old-energy companies are already working on this assumption, and trying to spread their risks. They are big investors in clean or renewable fuels such as wind, solar, hydrogen, and biomass. Anticipating a new carbon-constrained economy, they are also throwing money at research on "sequestration": ways to remove carbon from the air and store it underground. Nuclear power, assisted by heavy subsidies, is making a comeback. This transformation of the energy business would be less of a gamble for the firms concerned if they could be sure that a year from now the world will not be seeing another oil glut. And that is why some big energy companies are leading rather than resisting calls for a new policy—a coherent, stable blend of taxes, public spending, and regulation—to lessen America's demand for oil.

Devising such a policy will be the challenge for the next energy bill, which is needed soon. Is it simply a

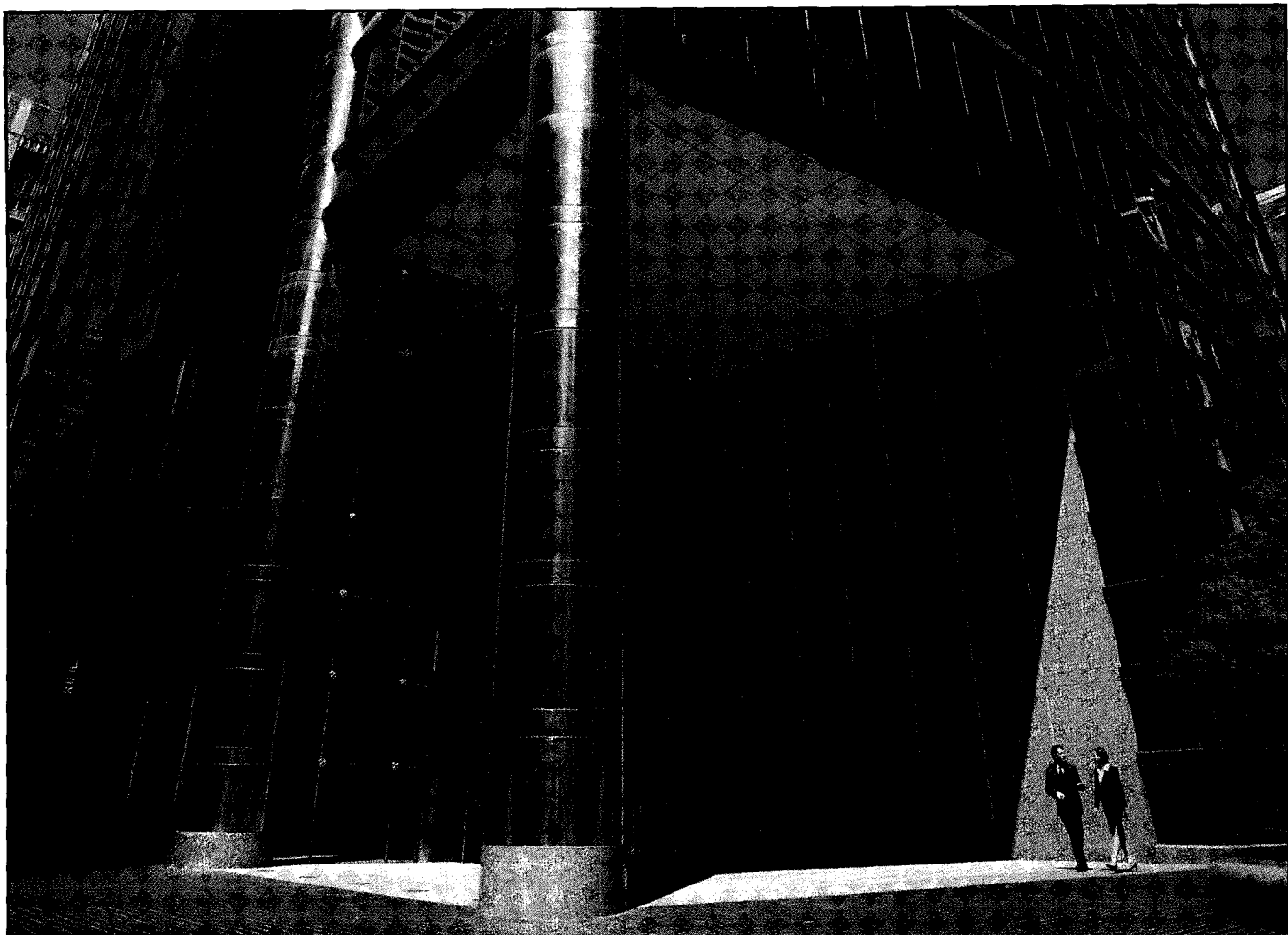
matter of America's deciding to follow Europe's lead—to accept the Kyoto treaty on greenhouse-gas emissions and mandate abrupt cuts in oil consumption? With luck, no. That is a bad model. Europe's commitment to the Kyoto process is shallow. Most countries are likely to miss their Kyoto targets, and the few that reach them will do so because of changes (such as Britain's switch from coal to natural gas in power generation) that predate Kyoto and were made for other reasons altogether.

Kyoto is not a good plan for the United States or for any other country. Europe's superior virtue on the issue is mostly affectation. The fact is, attitudes are converging, and policies are likely to follow. Speaking at the Aspen Ideas Festival in July (an event co-sponsored by *The Atlantic*), Bill Clinton said that the greatest threat facing mankind this century is not nuclear, biological, or chemical terrorism but global warming. He was warmly applauded, and—right or wrong—this is no longer a distinctively European point of view. Responding intelligently to the danger, such as it is, calls not for crushing, top-down controls, as Europe is finding out, but for a more pragmatic blend of private innovation and supportive public policy.

However, the right policies are not in place. Subsidies to encourage oil production, the mainstay of the energy bill, would be wrong even if oil were cheap and industry margins thin. Work on new fuels is worthier of support (but not ethanol, another big energy-bill beneficiary, which isn't very clean). Best and cheapest of all is oil conservation, including the use of hybrid vehicles and other technologies. Supporting such efforts with subsidies, however, is complicated and—given the ingenuity of those seeking subsidy—often wasteful.

There is a simpler way. Burning petroleum imposes costs (insecurity, carbon) on society at large. It is a perfect case of externality—and the best remedy, whatever the price of oil may be, is a tax that pushes those costs back to the consumer. It would raise some badly needed revenue at the same time. That is correct: a gas tax. Its time is coming. **A**

Clive Crook is a senior editor of The Atlantic.



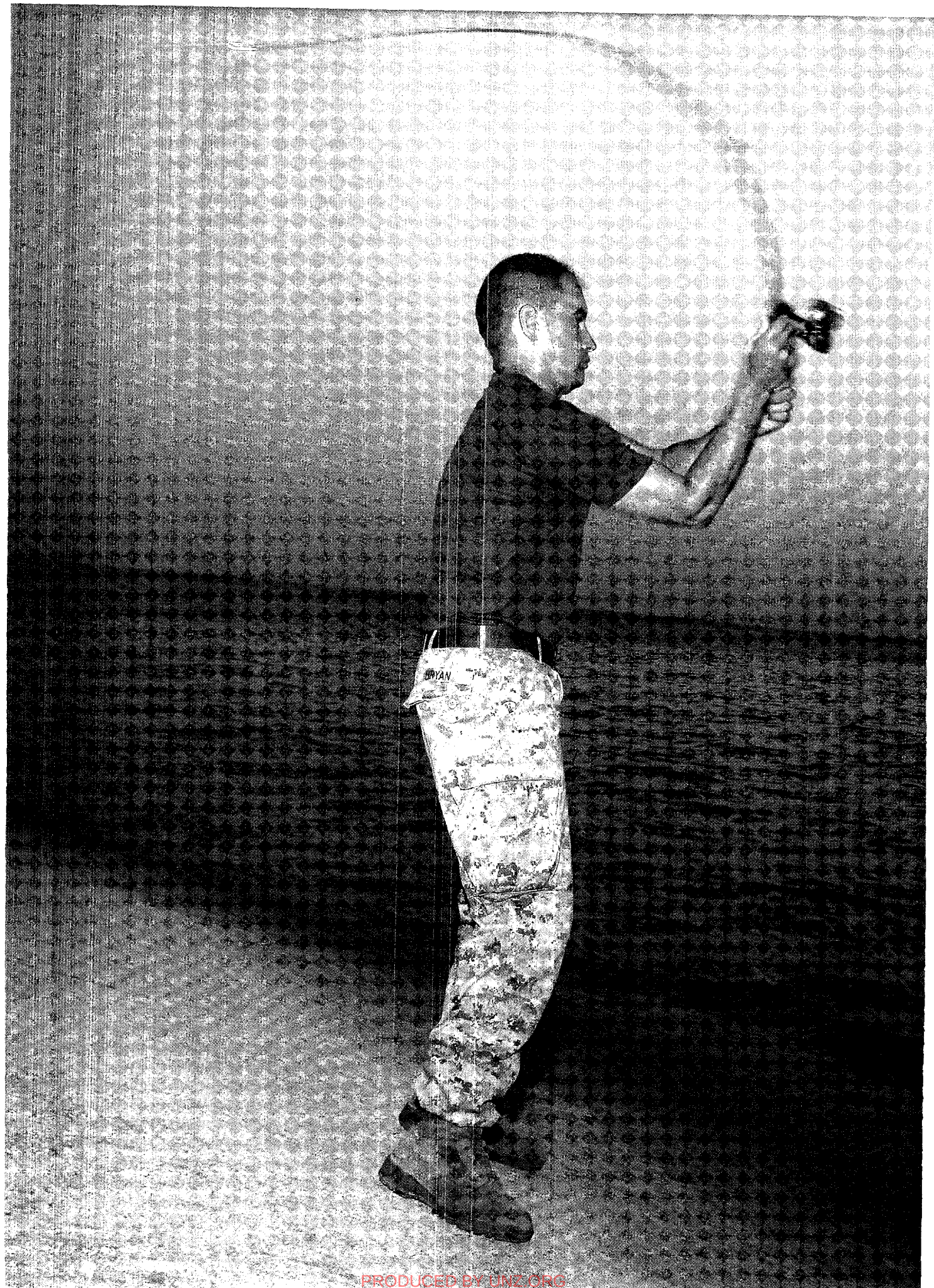
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PHOTO OP

A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

At sunset on July 28, 2005, after a day that cost two of his brothers-in-arms their lives, Sergeant Shawn Bryan (Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines) fishes in the waters of the Euphrates near the Haditha Dam, in Iraq's al-Anbar province. Six days later Lima Company lost nine more men in the deadliest roadside bombing of the Iraq War. Sergeant Bryan had been scheduled to be on the bombed vehicle that day but was reassigned at the last minute.

PHOTO BY RICHARD BUTLER / WORLD PICTURE NEWS

BRIEF LIVES

Mahmoud the Bashful

For Iran's new president, running from the 1979 hostage-taking is like John Hancock's running from the Declaration. What's his problem?

BY MARK BOWDEN

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the newly Elected president of Iran, is a slight man with a clipped, graying brown beard and a quiet manner, who lives simply, dresses casually, and presents himself as a man of the people. As mayor of Tehran the religiously conservative Ahmadinejad distinguished himself by his lack of ostentation (he maintains a Web site called Mardomyar, "The people's friend") and by warring against endemic bribery and corruption, which is how he won the popularity that thrust him into national prominence. He also repealed the social reforms put in place by his predecessors, insisted that male city employees wear long-sleeved shirts and grow beards, and cracked down on women who violated Islamic dress codes.

Elected president only after "reform" politicians had been removed from the ballot by the country's ruling clerics, he is very much an unreconstructed product of Iran's quarter-century-old Islamist revolution. He was without a doubt a key player in the student movement that helped to overthrow the shah, to maneuver the mullahs into power, and later to conduct bloody purges of leftist and secular political groups opposed to creating Iran's strict mullahocracy. But when his name was linked recently to the 1979 takeover of the U.S. embassy in Tehran, one of the revolution's central triumphal events, the president-elect took pains to distance himself, and the official government organs rallied behind him. Ahmadinejad's careful denial shows how much Iranian attitudes toward the takeover have changed.

The accusation was first made by Dave Roeder, Chuck Scott, Bill Daugherty, and several others of the fifty-two Americans taken hostage at the embassy, who claimed that they recognized the president-elect from still and moving pictures. Roeder was particularly adamant, saying that Ahmadinejad was among those who, in an effort to get him to talk, threatened to kidnap his disabled son in suburban Virginia and begin cutting off his fingers and toes. The hostages' memories are passionate, but they are also twenty-five years old, and hardly conclusive. A photograph of a bearded student resembling Ahmadinejad, escorting a bound, blindfolded hostage, has been widely reprinted, but it is impossible to tell if they are the same man.

What do we know about Ahmadinejad in those years? In 1979, as a student at the University of Science and Technology, he was one of the five founders, with Ibrahim Asgharzadeh, of Strengthen the Unity, an umbrella organization that was trying to unify the various revolutionary student factions. When Asgharzadeh proposed occupying the U.S. embassy, he was

HYPOTHETICALS

THE CASCADE OF PROLIFERATION

What might follow nuclear tests by North Korea and Iran? A bad- (but not worst-) case scenario

BY GRAHAM ALLISON

EAST ASIAN SCENARIO

North Korea conducts nuclear-weapon test, claims arsenal of 8-10 warheads

Japan withdraws from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), despite heavy U.S. and Chinese pressure; announces robust nuclear deterrent within six months

China accelerates nuclear deployments; Chinese-Japanese arms race begins

South Korea withdraws from the NPT and conducts nuclear test

North Korea expands production of nuclear weapons from 3 to 12 a year

2006

2007

2008

MIDDLE EASTERN/ SOUTH ASIAN SCENARIO

Iran surprises world by conducting nuclear test; Middle East echoes with popular calls to counter the "Shia threat" and restore Sunni dignity by acquiring nuclear deterrent
Iranian president Ahmadinejad reiterates former president Rafsanjani's threat that even a single nuclear weapon has the power to destroy Israel; Israel immediately acknowledges having at least 200 nuclear weapons, and declares that any nuclear attack on it—including a terrorist attack—will result in the annihilation of Iran

Oil prices spike sharply; "war risk" premium sustained indefinitely

Egypt launches crash nuclear program, over stern Israeli and U.S. warnings; Syria initiates search for nuclear capabilities

supported by two other founders—Mohsen Mirdamadi, who until recently was a member of the Majlis (Iran's congress), and Habibullah Bitaraf, now the country's minister of energy. Ahmadinejad and the fifth founder objected, arguing that the protest ought to be directed at the Soviet embassy, but they were outvoted.

Ahmadinejad has said that he did not support the embassy takeover until Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini endorsed it. The endorsement came late on November 4, 1979, the day the embassy was seized. Because the action was planned and executed rapidly, Ahmadinejad's resistance lasted only about ten days. For him it was a matter of strategy, not principle: he didn't object to storming an embassy and taking hostages; he simply disagreed as to target. In the ensuing drama, which unfolded throughout 1980 and into 1981, he remained a leader of the umbrella organization, and although he has denied being directly involved in overrunning the American embassy grounds or in holding or questioning hostages, former hostage-takers I interviewed in Tehran consistently



identified him as one of their leaders. He played a significant role in the purging of leftists and secular scholars at Tehran universities, when Strengthen the Unity helped identify campus heretics for prison and execution. He later joined the Revolutionary Guards, and reports, which he denies, have linked him to at least one of Tehran's overseas assassinations.

In the past Ahmadinejad might have been expected to exaggerate his

connection rather than to downplay it. In the early eighties the defiant Students Following the Imam's Line were the darlings of the revolution. Their uncontested takeover of the embassy came nine months after the shah had effectively been chased out of the country. It was the most important event in the mullahs' rise to power. Khomeini proclaimed it "a second revolution, greater than the first." Ibrahim Asgharzadeh has told me that during that period he and the other leaders of the takeover received fan mail, marriage proposals, and offers of high government office.

"We turned them all down," said Asgharzadeh, who was in his early twenties at the time. "We told them we were too young." But today many of Iran's top officials were leaders in the hostage crisis, during which they thumbed their noses at international diplomacy and effectively isolated their country from the world community.

The Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, and Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the former president and a losing candidate in the most recent election, endorsed the takeover and

North Korea successfully tests Taepo Dong-3, a missile that can reliably carry nuclear warheads to the U.S. mainland; South Korea, fearing loss of U.S. deterrent, steps up nuclear-weapons production

Growing arsenals of neighbors North Korea, Japan, and South Korea force adoption of "hair-trigger" launch protocols all around

North Korean arsenal reaches sufficient size to allow covert sale of nukes to other countries; Venezuela and Nigeria are the first customers

Covert Taiwanese progress toward nuclear-weapons capability leaked; China blockades Taiwan, demanding verifiable elimination of its nuclear program

Representatives of al-Qaeda and the North Korean government meet to discuss the purchase of multiple nuclear weapons

2009

2010

2011

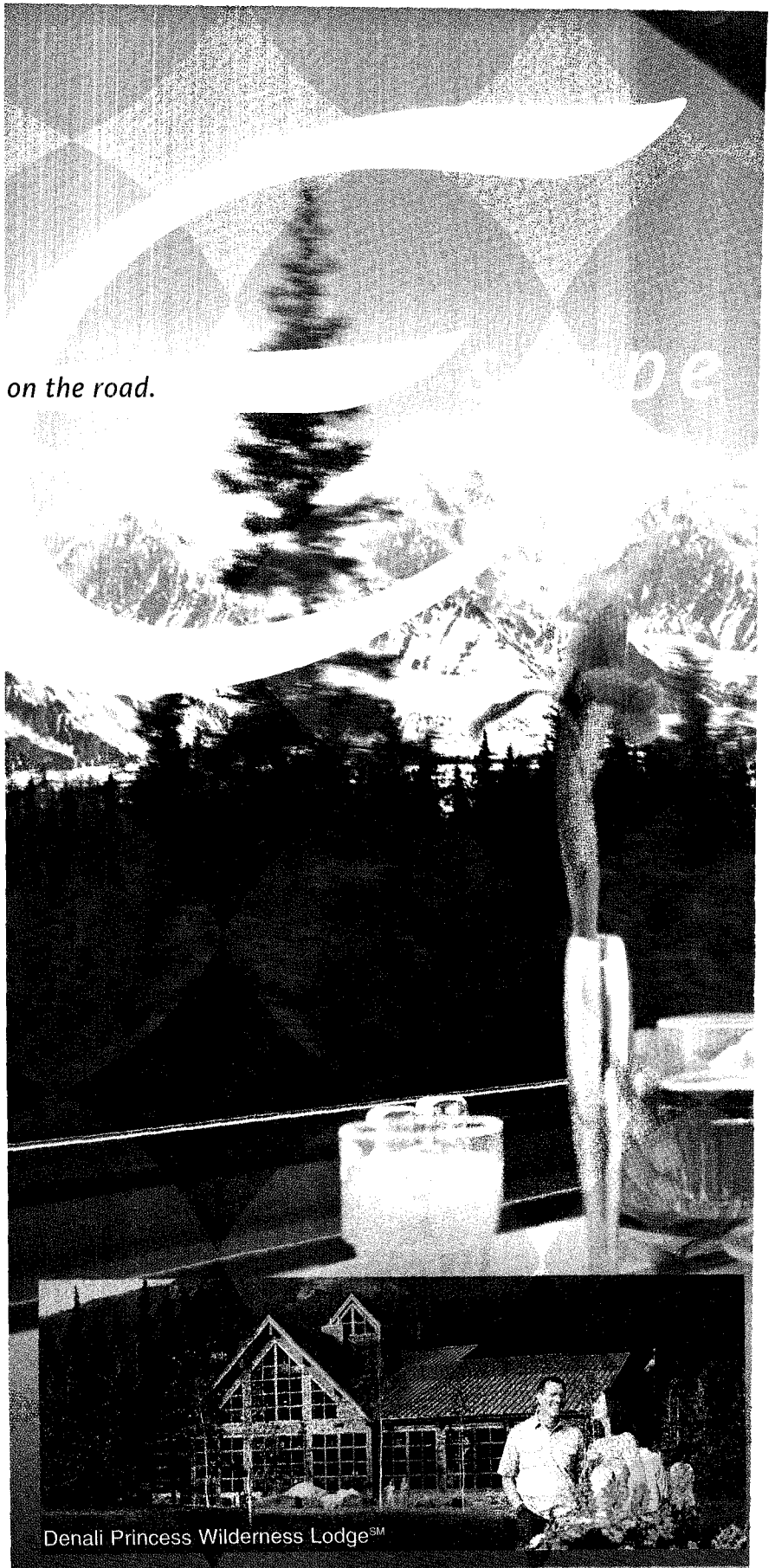
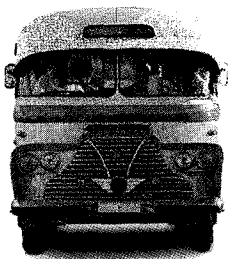
Israel launches conventional pre-emptive strike against all known Egyptian nuclear facilities; war narrowly averted; wave of terror against Israel and United States begins

Saudi Arabia announces purchase of multiple nuclear weapons from an undisclosed seller (Pakistan is strongly suspected); threatens immediate use in face of any attack on it, conventional or otherwise

United States, China, India, and others compete to expand strategic oil reserves and lock up long-term contracts, pushing oil prices to new highs

Graham Allison is the director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, at Harvard University, and the author of Nuclear Terrorism: The Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe.

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WHO WILL BE THE NEXT FED CHAIRMAN?

When Alan Greenspan steps down as chairman of the Federal Reserve System, on January 31, it will mark the end of a nearly twenty-year run for one of the most respected and successful monetary puppeteers in the Fed's ninety-two-year history. Deciphering Greenspan's gnomish phrasings has long been a favorite Wall Street pastime. Now there's a new one: guessing who might succeed him.

In June, President Bush tapped Ben Bernanke to chair his Council of Economic Advisers, fueling speculation that the Princeton economist may be the front-runner. When the Irish bookmaker Paddy-power.com offered up odds on who will be confirmed as the next Fed chairman, irrationally exuberant bettors reacted like investors to a sizable interest-rate cut, and Bernanke jumped out to an early lead. But four other worthy candidates are in the mix. Here's a tip sheet on the action. —JOHN SELLERS

5 to 4: BEN BERNANKE

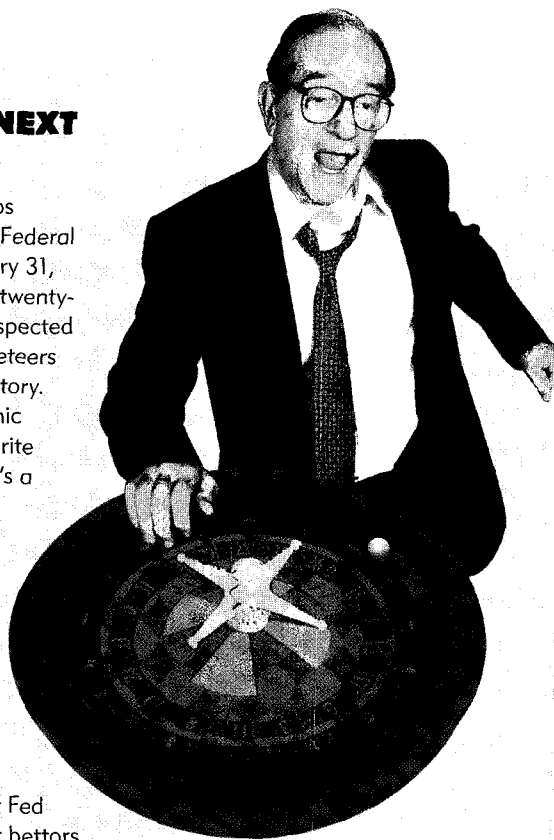
Why bet on him? The fifty-one-year-old left his position on the Federal Reserve Board to join the White House staff; he has worked closely with Greenspan and has the ear of the president.

Why not bet on him? There aren't many reasons. But here's one: even with his recent appointment to the Bush team, he has the least political experience of all the candidates.

9 to 4: R. GLENN HUBBARD

Why bet on him? The youngest of these candidates (forty-seven), he served as Bush's first economic adviser, and is credited with being the architect of many of the president's tax-cut policies. Upon resigning from his White House post in 2003 he wrote, "I hope that I may serve again."

Why not bet on him? In his 2003 resignation letter he also wrote that he was moving back to New York City to be with his wife and children, because "family needs are my most significant concern." Should the nation's economy have to play second fiddle?



4 to 1: MARTIN FELDSTEIN

Why bet on him? As a former economic adviser to Ronald Reagan, he's the biggest name here—and possibly the most conservative.

Why not bet on him? Dubbed "Dr. Gloom" for his concern about the rising deficit under Reagan, Feldstein, at sixty-five, is the oldest candidate on the list. He wasn't afraid to disagree with the president, which may scare Bush away.

8 to 1: DONALD KOHN

Why bet on him? The sixty-two-year-old has served on the Federal Reserve's board of governors since 2002, and on its staff for more than two decades. He's regarded as Greenspan's Dick Cheney.

Why not bet on him? Kohn isn't a registered Republican.

8 to 1: JOHN TAYLOR

Why bet on him? The fifty-eight-year-old Stanford professor, who served under the first President Bush, created the widely lauded "Taylor rule," a formula designed to help central banks like the Fed set interest rates.

Why not bet on him? He reportedly riled staffers during a stint at the Treasury Department a few years ago. (Also, he shares a name with the bassist for Duran Duran.)

supervised negotiations for its eventual end. Khamenei frequently visited and spoke with the hostages. Mohsen Rezaee, a prominent member of the Revolutionary Guards and later its leader, is now the head of the Expediency Discernment Council, a powerful group that mediates disputes between the Majlis and the Guardian Council, the country's ruling clerics. Nilufar Ebtekar, the notorious spokeswoman for Students Following the Imam's Line, who has since changed her first name to Massoumeh, now serves as a vice-president of Iran and as minister for the environment. Her husband, Muhammad Hashemi, another primary architect of the takeover, rose to become deputy minister for information, Iran's second most powerful intelligence official. The list goes on.

But although a role in the takeover is hardly a surprising item on the résumé of an Iranian leader, Ahmadinejad's prompt disavowal was a tacit acknowledgment that today the episode comes with distinct political liabilities, both foreign and domestic. Why would an association with the embassy takeover hurt Ahmadinejad? Because the hostage crisis resulted in such profound and lasting misfortune in Iran. Many Iranians (including Asgharzadeh) now regard it as an enormous blunder. Iranian conspiracy theorists on both the left and the right take solace in the preposterous notion that the whole thing was really planned by the CIA, which would make the students at best dupes, and at worst hirelings, of the Great Satan. In the eyes of the world, the takeover has damaged Iran's standing. It was a crime against international diplomacy, an age-old system that exists to resolve problems between nations peacefully. As Iran's new president, Ahmadinejad will be the most visible symbol of Iran in the world.

Like many officials newly thrust into power, Ahmadinejad is trying to begin by unifying the nation behind him and presenting a fresh face to the world. The guise of a hostage-taker ill suits either goal. ■

Mark Bowden, a national correspondent for The Atlantic, is the author of Guests of the Ayatollah, to be published next year.

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The Executioner's Swan Song?

*The death penalty is not about to vanish overnight—
but the Supreme Court's tolerance for it is diminishing rapidly*

BY BENJAMIN WITTES

Is it just my imagination, or has there been a palpable change recently in the Supreme Court's approach to death-penalty cases?

The Court has without question shifted gears on capital punishment. For years the justices turned a willfully blind eye to the claims of those on death row. They created onerous procedural obstacles to federal review of state convictions. They tolerated the most grotesque incompetence by counsel in capital cases, along with alarming disparities in the way the death penalty was implemented. They allowed executions not only of the mentally retarded but of the seriously mentally ill. In short, the message from the Court to death-penalty states was simple: Godspeed.

But lately the Court has struck a very different tone; one question raised by John Roberts's nomination is whether this trend will last. In two particularly high-profile cases, one in 2002 and the other last spring, it rejected the death penalty first for the mentally retarded and then for juvenile offenders; the justices had upheld it in both situations as recently as 1989. In other cases the justices have also tightened the rules concerning apparent efforts by prosecutors to strike African-Americans from capital juries. They have made clear that juries, not judges, must make death judgments. They have beaten up on Texas—the nation's unrivaled leader in death-penalty activity—for cases involving flawed jury instructions and prosecutorial misbehavior. And they have sought to rein in certain lower courts that have reviewed death cases with particular leniency. It has almost seemed to be a different Court.

Why? It was the same group of justices until now.

In large measure the shift emanates from a change of heart in what were

the Court's two swing justices: Anthony Kennedy and the soon-to-retire Sandra Day O'Connor. Once solidly part of the bloc that deferred to state convictions and procedures, both evidently had second thoughts. Back in 1991, for example, O'Connor wrote the Court opinion refusing to even consider the case of



Roger Keith Coleman, a Virginia death-row inmate with particularly strong claims of innocence. Coleman had lost his chance to appeal when his lawyers missed a state-court filing deadline by a single day. O'Connor began the opinion, "This is a case about federalism." A decade later, however, she was singing a different tune. "Serious questions are being raised about whether the death penalty is being fairly administered in this country," she said in a 2001 speech in Minnesota. "Minnesota doesn't have it, and you must breathe a big sigh of relief every day."

Kennedy's shift has been just as dramatic. In 1989, for example, Kennedy signed Justice Antonin Scalia's opinion upholding the death penalty for people who committed their offenses as juveniles. This year he

wrote the opinion striking down the juvenile death penalty, and in doing so he explicitly repudiated several of the methodological premises of the Scalia opinion he had signed.

The attitudinal shift on the part of Kennedy and O'Connor—two of the less rigidly principled justices in recent years—is hardly a surprise. As DNA exonerated growing numbers of prisoners through the 1990s, the public grew more skeptical toward capital punishment in general, realizing that even when juries are sure of a person's guilt, they are sometimes dead wrong. Although polls still show majority support for the death penalty, that support

is shrinking. Juries are handing down fewer death sentences. Executions countrywide, after reaching a modern-day high of ninety-eight in 1999, declined to fifty-nine last year. Judges are not immune from the anxieties that have led to these trends. It would actually be surprising if no Supreme Court justice had rethought his or her approach in light of what we now know about capital punishment.

So is the Court getting ready to strike down the death penalty once and for all?

Almost certainly not. And for the Court's reticence on this point, foes of the death penalty (of which I am one) should, paradoxically, count themselves lucky. The justices went down the abolition road once before. In their ill-fated

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1972 decision in *Furman v. Georgia*—which came down at a time when capital punishment was on the decline anyway—they effectively struck down the death-penalty statutes of every state in the country that had them. The intense public reaction against the decision provoked many states to rewrite their capital-punishment laws to comply with the Court's new standards—much as the current backlash against judicially mandated recognition for gay marriage is prompting state constitutional amend-

tion, it sends a message legitimizing capital punishment. In contrast, when the Court nibbles away at the death penalty, it undermines its acceptability. It also makes capital cases ever more difficult and expensive for states to litigate, thereby making capital punishment progressively less viable as a regular instrument of criminal justice.

Such moral and practical constraints may not matter in Texas, Oklahoma, and Virginia, where the death penalty is a comparatively routine feature of the criminal-justice system. But states like these are the exception, not the rule: only five states have accounted for two thirds of all executions since 1976. In

most places where the death penalty is legal it is quite marginal, and judicial tolerance can matter a lot to its vitality. Recently, for example, courts in New York effectively invalidated that state's death-penalty statute, which had been passed only in 1995 and had never led to an execution. The state legislature decided not to pass another.

What are the big issues to come?

The most important is quality of counsel, about which the blitheness of the Court's jurisprudence has bordered on the obscene. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals recently had to debate, for example, whether under the Supreme Court's precedents a death-row inmate whose lawyer had slept through considerable portions of his capital trial was presumptively entitled to a new trial. The Court has issued a few opinions recently—including a potentially significant one last term—emphasizing the importance of effective counsel. But it has only begun to tinker with its prior approach here, and it's far from clear that the justices intend a real revision. Even in the midst of their newfound concern about capital cases, for example, they let a Virginia man be executed despite the fact that, unbeknownst to him, his lawyer at trial had previously represented the person he was accused of killing. No state behavior in capital cases as consistently undermines

fair-trial rights as the appointment of ill-prepared, overworked, or just plain lousy lawyers to represent people whose lives are on the line. How seriously the justices take on this question will tell a lot about how committed they are to a new approach.

How much will the change of personnel affect the Court's direction here?

Perhaps a lot. If Roberts proves hard-line, O'Connor's resignation could shift doctrine back toward permissiveness very quickly. On the other hand, a Bush appointee to replace Chief Justice William Rehnquist—a solid part of the Court's conservative flank on these questions—wouldn't have to be very moderate to fortify the current trend considerably.

So what's your instinct about where all this is headed?

Despite O'Connor's retirement, the Court's new approach seems likely to impose significant constraints on capital punishment, but ones that will be largely invisible to the public. The Court will probably not be striking down many laws, but the justices will tighten the screws by scrutinizing individual cases enough to further isolate the death penalty regionally and to raise its political and financial costs. This is a matter less of politics than of simple human nature. The Court speaks in the language of principle, but only a few of the justices are so committed to the principle of deference to state-court judgments that they would feel comfortable over time seeing their names on opinions upholding manifest injustices. Since Roger Keith Coleman's execution, in 1992, Virginia law-enforcement authorities have successfully resisted calls for posthumous DNA testing that could resolve his claims of innocence. Coleman may or may not have been innocent; but someday we're going to learn for sure that someone put to death in this country was in fact not guilty. And it's a fair bet that no one would want her obituary to say she called the debate over that execution "a case about federalism." ▀

Benjamin Wittes is an editorial writer at The Washington Post.

How much will John Roberts's nomination change the Court's stance on the death penalty? Perhaps a lot.

ments that limit marriage to heterosexual couples. Within just a few years the Court allowed these new laws to go into effect: executions began again—and then skyrocketed, from one in 1977 to twenty-five in 1987 to seventy-four in 1997. By denying the public the option of a penalty that, although disfavored by elites, was supported—then as now—by much of the polity at large, the courts intensified public commitment to it. With capital punishment once again on the wane, justices uncomfortable with it would be deeply foolish to repeat that mistake. Even the Court's liberal flank seems to understand this.

So is the new judicial scrutiny in capital cases just window dressing?

Not at all. The Court's new interest in scrutinizing capital cases has the effect of reducing the death penalty's political air supply—that is, of constricting its public legitimacy. In theory this should not be the case—just as the permissive attitude the Court for many years took toward executions should not have functioned as a political enabler of them. The Court has never approved of or rejected the death penalty as a political matter. Its decisions merely outline what the ground rules of democratic government require of states that want to use it. Yet people do not read Supreme Court opinions in strictly legal terms. Every time the Court upholds a dicey state convic-

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Primary Sources

The prospects for a united Korea; a new study of old studies; TV dads gain financial ground; AIDS in the Islamic world

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

One Peninsula, One State?

Will the two Koreas eventually be reunited, and if so, how? A new study by the RAND Corporation examines various possible scenarios. If North Korea adopts a more open, Chinese-style economic model, a federalist arrangement with South Korea might result; if continuing economic adversity brings down Kim Jong Il's regime, "appropriate financial inducements," among other things, might persuade North Koreans to cast their lot with the South; if another peninsular war breaks out, the United States and China might negotiate a reunification, which would probably involve the withdrawal of U.S. troops. Of course, as the authors note, some of these scenarios could have darker outcomes: an internal collapse of Kim's regime could lead to the emergence of regional warlords; a peninsular conflict could leave foreign troops occupying the North and facing an insurgency like Iraq's. But they say a united Korea may be likelier than we think. In the mid-1990s, the study points out, many observers confidently predicted reunification and were disappointed; now that fewer are looking to the possibility, "we might be surprised once again—but this time in the reverse direction."

—"North Korean Paradoxes: Circumstances, Costs, and Consequences of Korean Unification," Charles Wolf Jr. and Kamil Akramov, RAND Corporation

MEDICINE

The Muslim Face of AIDS

A surge in rates of HIV infection may soon join the myriad issues facing the Islamic world. According to a study from the National Bureau of Asian Research, a Seattle-based think tank, the virus threatens to move through Muslim-majority nations along "the same pathways it followed in Sub-Saharan Africa." The report is largely speculative, because few Muslim countries collect systematic data on HIV and AIDS—which, the authors argue, is part of the problem. With the exceptions of Bangladesh and (surprisingly) Iran, Muslim nations have not

mounted significant public-health campaigns to combat AIDS, in part because authorities assume that few Muslims engage in behaviors such as premarital sex, homosexuality, prostitution, and drug use. The authors observe that these assumptions did not hold true for Muslims in sub-Saharan Africa, and are likely to have tragic consequences in the rest of the Islamic world.

—"Behind the Veil of a Public Health Crisis: HIV/AIDS in the Muslim World," Laura M. Kelley and Nicholas Eberstadt, National Bureau of Asian Research

Don't Take Our Word for It, But ...

It will come as no shock to regular readers of this feature that researchers sometimes get things wrong. How frequently they do so is the subject of new, well, research in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, which examined several dozen clinical studies that were published in

major journals from 1990 to 2003 and subsequently cited more than a thousand times apiece. For 16 percent of these "high-impact" studies, results were contradicted by later research; for another 16 percent they were found to be weaker than originally thought. The report's author acknowledges that "there is no proof that the subsequent studies ... were necessarily correct," but adds that in each case the later study was either larger or better controlled.

—"Contradicted and Initially Stronger Effects in Highly Cited Clinical Research," John P.A. Ioannidis, JAMA

BUSINESS

Stocks and Blondes

If you're an average Joe looking for a stock tip, you're probably better off asking your mother or your wife than a male relative or friend. So suggests a recent Merrill Lynch survey, which found that women make fewer investment mistakes than men and repeat their mistakes less often—even though women investors, on average, know less about investing than men do (they scored lower on questions about investing) and enjoy it less. Women come out better on just about every count: they are less likely to hold a losing investment too long, and less likely to wait too long to sell a winner; they're also less likely to put too much money into a single investment or to buy a reputedly hot stock without doing sufficient research.

—"When It Comes to Investing, Gender a Strong Influence on Behavior," Merrill Lynch

TELEVISION DADS

Their professions and salaries (in 2005 dollars)

	Profession	Salary
J. R. Ewing <i>Dallas</i> (1978–1991)	CEO	\$636,904
Jed Bartlet <i>The West Wing</i> (1999–)	U.S. president	\$400,000
Cliff Huxtable <i>The Cosby Show</i> (1984–1992)	Obstetrician	\$239,028
Sandy Cohen <i>The OC</i> (2003–)	Lawyer	\$150,693
Rob Petrie <i>The Dick Van Dyke Show</i> (1961–1966)	TV writer	\$85,192
Homer Simpson <i>The Simpsons</i> (1989–)	Nuclear safety inspector	\$65,346
Ricky Ricardo <i>I Love Lucy</i> (1951–1957)	Bandleader	\$52,155
Ward Cleaver <i>Leave It to Beaver</i> (1957–1963)	Accountant	\$46,835
Jim Anderson <i>Father Knows Best</i> (1954–1960)	Insurance agent	\$38,974
Fred Flintstone <i>The Flintstones</i> (1960–1966)	Quarry crane operator	\$37,518

ENTERTAINMENT

From Bedrock to the OC

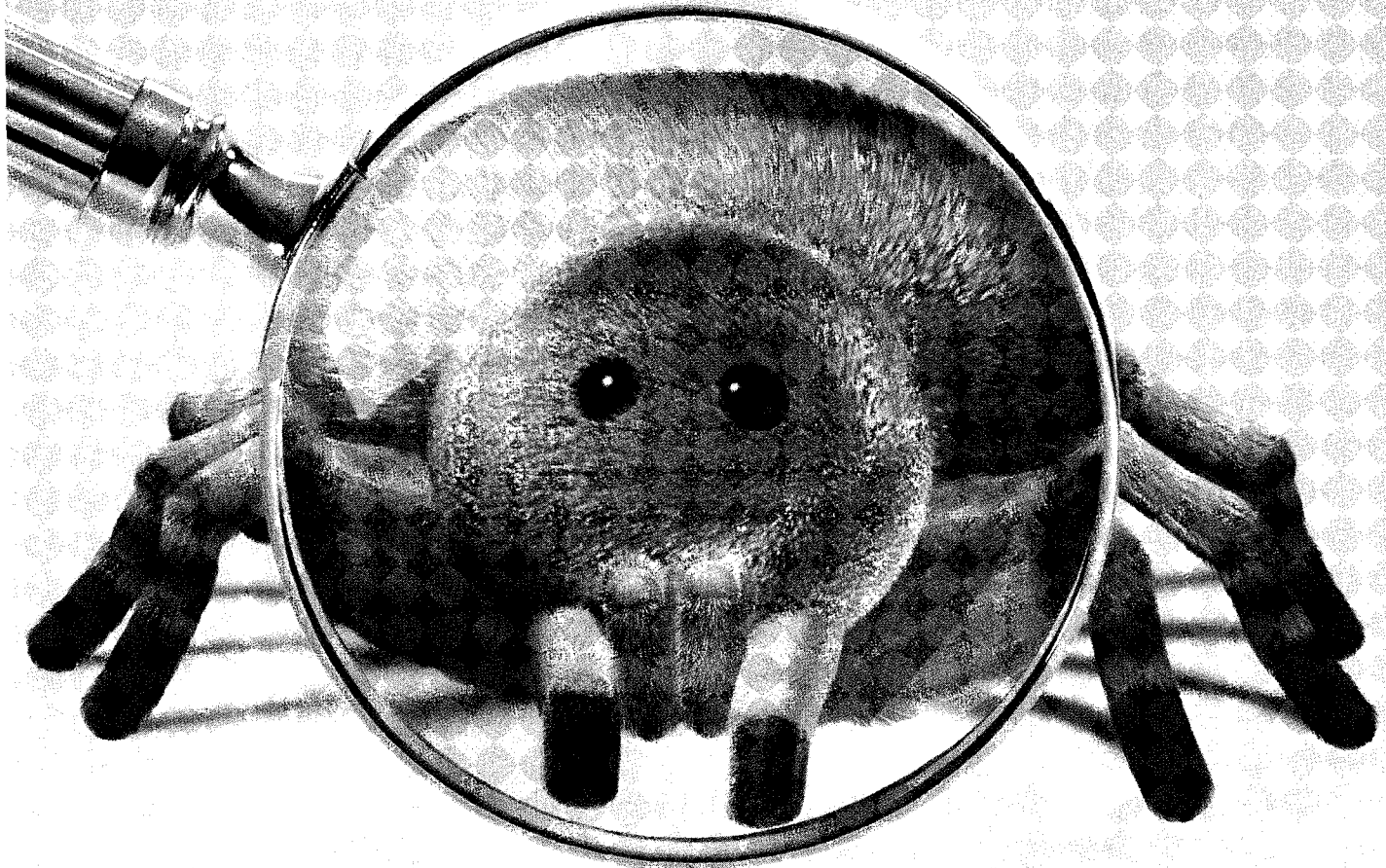
A half century of television has been good to fathers on TV, according to the Web site Salary.com, which recently used real-life salaries to estimate the earnings of characters from sixty shows. Nowadays TV dads make an average of \$195,000 a year—more than double the pay of their 1950s counterparts, who made about \$75,000 in 2005 dollars. The rising standard of living is due to changes in the kinds of jobs held by the fathers, who are increasingly depicted in high-paying professions.

—"TV Dads: Real-Life Salaries Nearly \$200,000," Dan Malachowski, Salary.com

Compiled by Ross Douthat and Marshall Poe. For links to the reports and documents discussed in these pages visit www.theatlantic.com/doc/200510/primarysources

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THE WORLD IN NUMBERS

The World Is Spiky

Globalization has changed the economic playing field, but hasn't leveled it

A POPULATION

Urban areas house half of all the world's people, and continue to grow in both rich and poor countries.

The world, according to the title of the *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman's book, is flat. Thanks to advances in technology, the global playing field has been leveled, the prizes are there for the taking, and everyone's a player—no matter where on the surface of the earth he or she may reside. “In a flat world,” Friedman writes, “you can innovate without having to emigrate.”

Friedman is not alone in this belief: for the better part of the past century economists have been writing about the leveling effects of technology. From the invention of the telephone, the automobile, and the airplane to the rise of the personal computer and the Internet, technological progress has steadily eroded the economic importance of geographic place—or so the argument goes.

But in partnership with colleagues at George Mason University and the geographer Tim Gulden, of the Center for International and Security Studies, at the University of Maryland, I've begun to chart a very different economic topography. By almost any measure the international economic landscape is not at all flat. On the contrary, our world is amazingly “spiky.” In terms of both sheer economic horsepower and cutting-edge innovation,

surprisingly few regions truly matter in today's global economy. What's more, the tallest peaks—the cities and regions that drive the world economy—are growing ever higher, while the valleys mostly languish.

The most obvious challenge to the flat-world hypothesis is the explosive growth of cities worldwide. More and more people are clustering in urban areas—the world's demographic mountain ranges, so to speak. The share of the world's population living in urban areas, just three percent in 1800, was nearly 30 percent by 1950. Today it stands at about 50 percent; in advanced countries three out of four people live in urban areas. Map A shows the uneven distribution

PEAKS, HILLS, AND VALLEYS

When looked at through the lens of economic production, many cities with large populations are diminished and some nearly vanish. Three sorts of places make up the modern economic landscape. First are the cities that generate innovations. These are the tallest peaks; they have the capacity to attract global talent and create new products and industries. They are few in number, and difficult to topple. Second are the economic “hills”—places that manufacture the world's established goods, take its calls, and support its innovation engines. These hills can rise and fall quickly; they are prosperous but insecure. Some, like Dublin and Seoul, are growing into innovative, wealthy peaks; others are declining, eroded by high labor costs and a lack of enduring competitive advantage. Finally there are the vast valleys—places with little connection to the global economy and few immediate prospects.

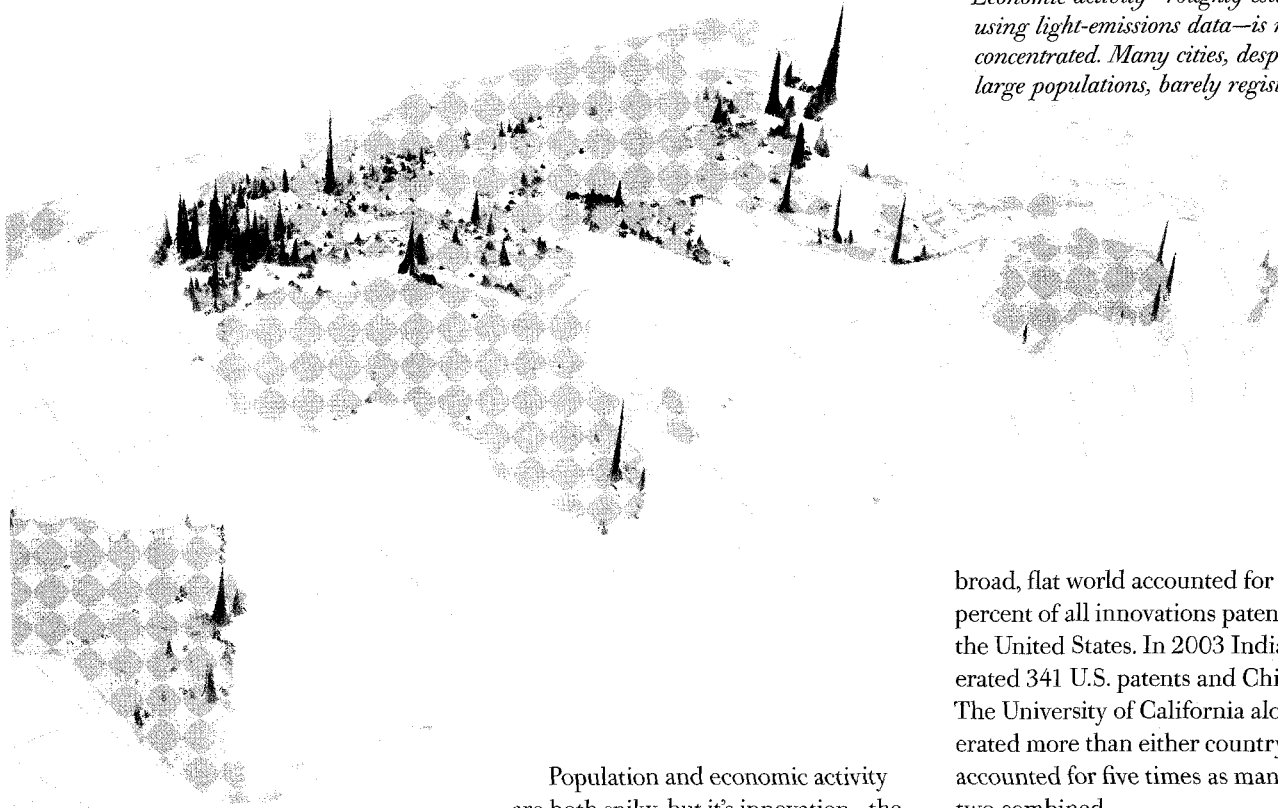
of the world's population. Five megacities currently have more than 20 million inhabitants each. Twenty-four cities have more than 10 million inhabitants, sixty more than 5 million, and 150 more than 2.5 million. Population density is of course a crude indicator of human and economic activity. But it does suggest that at least some of the tectonic forces of economics are concentrating people and resources, and pushing up some places more than others.

Still, differences in population density vastly understate the spikiness of the global economy; the continuing dominance of the world's most productive urban areas is astounding. When it comes to actual economic output, the ten largest U.S. metropolitan areas combined are behind only the United

SOURCE: CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EARTH SCIENCE INFORMATION NETWORK
WWW.CIESIN.COLUMBIA-EDUCATION.ORG

6 LIGHT EMISSIONS

Economic activity—roughly estimated here using light-emissions data—is remarkably concentrated. Many cities, despite their large populations, barely register.



States as a whole and Japan. New York's economy alone is about the size of Russia's or Brazil's, and Chicago's is on a par with Sweden's. Together New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Boston have a bigger economy than all of China. If U.S. metropolitan areas were countries, they'd make up forty-seven of the biggest 100 economies in the world.

Unfortunately, no single, comprehensive information source exists for the economic production of all the world's cities. A rough proxy is available, though. Map B shows a variation on the widely circulated view of the world at night, with higher concentrations of light—indicating higher energy use and, presumably, stronger economic production—appearing in greater relief. U.S. regions appear almost Himalayan on this map. From their summits one might look out on a smaller mountain range stretching across Europe, some isolated peaks in Asia, and a few scattered hills throughout the rest of the world.

Population and economic activity are both spiky, but it's innovation—the engine of economic growth—that is most concentrated. The World Intellectual Property Organization recorded about 300,000 patents from resident inventors in more than a hundred nations in 2002 (the most recent year for which statistics are available). Nearly two thirds of them went to American and Japanese inventors. Eighty-five percent went to the residents of just five countries (Japan, the United States, South Korea, Germany, and Russia).

Worldwide patent statistics can be somewhat misleading, since different countries follow different standards for granting patents. But patents granted in the United States—which receives patent applications for nearly all major innovations worldwide, and holds them to the same strict standards—tell a similar story. Nearly 90,000 of the 170,000 patents granted in the United States in 2002 went to Americans. Some 35,000 went to Japanese inventors, and 11,000 to Germans. The next ten most innovative countries—including the usual suspects in Europe plus Taiwan, South Korea, Israel, and Canada—produced roughly 25,000 more. The rest of the

broad, flat world accounted for just five percent of all innovations patented in the United States. In 2003 India generated 341 U.S. patents and China 297. The University of California alone generated more than either country. IBM accounted for five times as many as the two combined.

This is not to say that Indians and Chinese are not innovative. On the contrary, AnnaLee Saxenian, of the University of California at Berkeley, has shown that Indian and Chinese entrepreneurs founded or co-founded roughly 30 percent of all Silicon Valley startups in the late 1990s. But these fundamentally creative people had to travel to Silicon Valley and be absorbed into its innovative ecosystem before their ideas became economically viable. Such ecosystems matter, and there aren't many of them.

Map C—which makes use of data from both the World Intellectual Property Organization and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office—shows a world composed of innovation peaks and valleys. Tokyo, Seoul, New York, and San Francisco remain the front-runners in the patenting competition. Boston, Seattle, Austin, Toronto, Vancouver, Berlin, Stockholm, Helsinki, London, Osaka, Taipei, and Sydney also stand out.

Map D shows the residence of the 1,200 most heavily cited scientists in leading fields. Scientific advance is even more concentrated than patent

SOURCE: U.S. DEFENSE METEOROLOGICAL SATELLITE PROGRAM

PATENTS

Just a few places produce most of the world's innovations. Innovation remains difficult without a critical mass of financiers, entrepreneurs, and scientists, often nourished by world-class universities and flexible corporations.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF INNOVATION

Commercial innovation and scientific advance are both highly concentrated—but not always in the same places. Several cities in East Asia—particularly in Japan—are home to prolific business innovation but still depend disproportionately on scientific breakthroughs made elsewhere. Likewise, some cities excel in scientific research but not in commercial adaptation. The few places that do both well are very strongly positioned in the global economy. These regions have little to fear, and much to gain, from continuing globalization.

production. Most occurs not just in a handful of countries but in a handful of cities—primarily in the United States and Europe. Chinese and Indian cities do not even register. As far as global innovation is concerned, perhaps a few dozen places worldwide really compete at the cutting edge.

Concentrations of creative and talented people are particularly important for innovation, according to the Nobel Prize-winning economist Robert Lucas. Ideas flow more freely, are honed more sharply, and can be put into practice more quickly when large numbers of innovators, implementers, and financial backers are in constant contact with one another, both in and out of the office. Creative people cluster not simply because they like to be around one another or they prefer cosmopolitan centers with lots of amenities, though both those things count. They and their companies also cluster because of the powerful pro-

ductivity advantages, economies of scale, and knowledge spillovers such density brings.

So although one might not *have* to emigrate to innovate, it certainly appears that innovation, economic growth, and prosperity occur in those places that attract a critical mass of top creative talent. Because globalization has increased the returns to innovation, by allowing innovative products and services to quickly reach consumers worldwide, it has strengthened the lure that innovation centers hold for our planet's best and brightest, reinforcing the spikiness of wealth and economic production.

The main difference between now and even a couple of decades ago is not that the world has become flatter but that the world's peaks have become slightly more dispersed—and that the world's hills, the industrial and service centers that produce mature products and support innovation centers, have proliferated and shifted. For the

better part of the twentieth century the United States claimed the lion's share of the global economy's innovation peaks, leaving a few outposts in Europe and Japan. But America has since lost some of those peaks, as such industrial-age powerhouses as Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Cleveland have eroded. At the same time, a number of regions in Europe, Scandinavia, Canada, and the Pacific Rim have moved up.

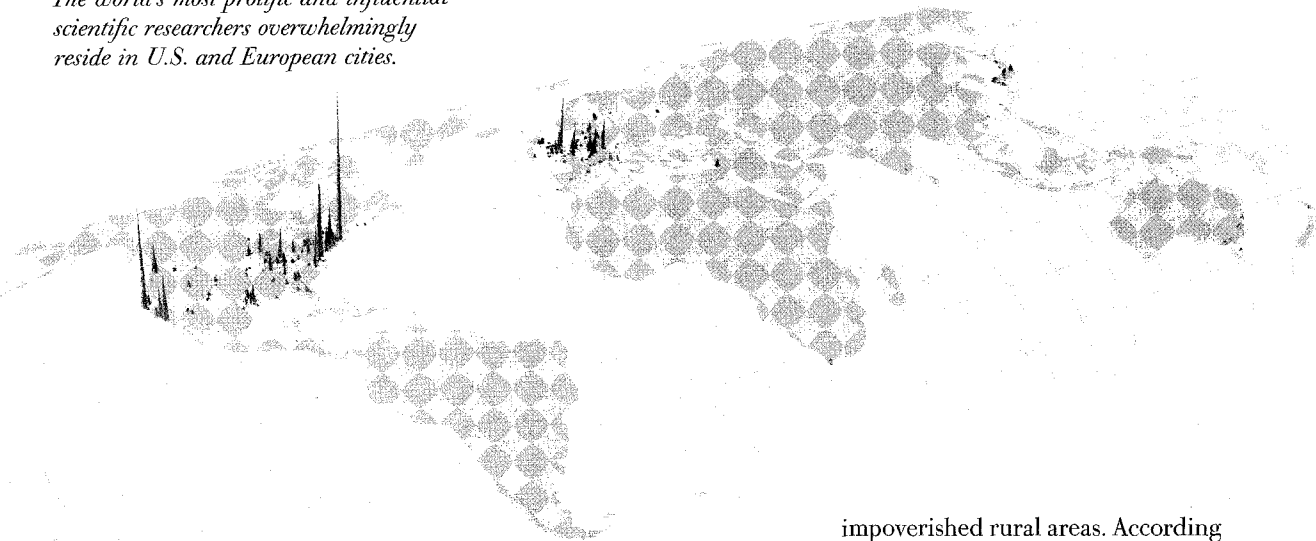
The world today looks flat to some because the economic and social distances between peaks worldwide have gotten smaller. Connection between peaks has been strengthened by the easy mobility of the global creative class—about 150 million people worldwide. They participate in a global technology system and a global labor market that allow them to migrate freely among the world's leading cities. In a Brookings Institution study the demographer Robert Lang and the world-cities expert Peter Taylor identify a relatively small group of leading city-regions—London, New York, Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco among them—that are strongly connected to one another.

But Lang and Taylor also identify a much larger group of city-regions that are far more locally oriented. People in spiky places are often more connected

SOURCE: WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION; U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

SCIENTIFIC CITATIONS

The world's most prolific and influential scientific researchers overwhelmingly reside in U.S. and European cities.



to one another, even from half a world away, than they are to people and places in their veritable back yards.

The flat-world theory is not completely misguided. It is a welcome supplement to the widely accepted view (illustrated by the Live 8 concerts and Bono's forays into Africa, by the writings of Jeffrey Sachs and the UN Millennium project) that the growing divide between rich and poor countries is the fundamental feature of the world economy. Friedman's theory more accurately depicts a developing world with capabilities that translate into economic development. In his view, for example, the emerging economies of India and China combine cost advantages, high-tech skills, and entrepreneurial energy, enabling those countries to compete effectively for industries and jobs. The tensions set in motion as the playing field is leveled affect mainly the advanced countries, which see not only manufacturing work but also higher-end jobs, in fields such as software development and financial services, increasingly threatened by offshoring.

But the flat-world theory blinds us to far more insidious tensions among the world's growing peaks, sinking valleys, and shifting hills. The innovative, talent-attracting "have" regions seem increasingly remote from the talent-exporting "have-not" regions. Second-tier cities, from Detroit and Wolfsburg to Nagoya and Mexico City, are entering an escalating and potentially devastating competition for jobs, talent, and investment. And inequality is growing across the world and within countries.

This is far more harrowing than the flat world Friedman describes, and a good deal more treacherous than the old rich-poor divide. We see its effects in the political backlash against globalization in the advanced world. The recent rejection of the EU constitution by the French, for example, resulted in large part from high rates of "no" votes in suburban and rural quarters, which understandably fear globalization and integration.

But spiky globalization also wreaks havoc on poorer places. China is seeing enormous concentrations of talent and innovation in centers such as Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Beijing, all of which are a world apart from its vast,

impoverished rural areas. According to detailed polling by Richard Burkholder, of Gallup, average household incomes in urban China are now triple those in rural regions, and they've grown more than three times as fast since 1999; perhaps as a result, urban and rural Chinese now have very different, often conflicting political and lifestyle values. India is growing even more divided, as Bangalore, Hyderabad, and parts of New Delhi and Bombay pull away from the rest of that enormous country, creating destabilizing political tensions. Economic and demographic forces are sorting people around the world into geographically clustered "tribes" so different (and often mutually antagonistic) as to create a somewhat Hobbesian vision.

We are thus confronted with a difficult predicament. Economic progress requires that the peaks grow stronger and taller. But such growth will exacerbate economic and social disparities, fomenting political reactions that could threaten further innovation and economic progress. Managing the disparities between peaks and valleys worldwide—raising the valleys without shearing off the peaks—will be among the top political challenges of the coming decades. —RICHARD FLORIDA

Richard Florida, the author of The Flight of the Creative Class, is the Hirst Professor of Public Policy at George Mason University.

LINCOLN'S GREAT DEPRESSION

Abraham Lincoln fought clinical depression all his life, and if he were alive today, his condition would be treated as a "character issue"—that is, as a political liability. His condition was indeed a character issue: it gave him the tools to save the nation

BY JOSHUA WOLF SHENK

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When Abraham Lincoln came to the stage of the 1860 state Republican convention in Decatur, Illinois, the crowd roared in approval. Men threw hats and canes into the air, shaking the hall so much that the awning over the stage collapsed; according to an early account, "the roof was literally cheered off the building." Fifty-one years old, Lincoln was at the peak of his political career, with momentum that would soon sweep him to the nomination of the national party and then to the White House.

Yet to the convention audience Lincoln didn't seem euphoric, or triumphant, or even pleased. On the contrary, said a man named Johnson, observing from the convention floor, "I then thought him one of the most diffident and worst plagued men I ever saw."

The next day the convention closed. The crowds dispersed, leaving behind cigar stubs and handbills and the smells of sweat and whiskey. Later the lieutenant governor of Illinois, William J. Bross, walked the floor. He saw Lincoln sitting alone at the end of the hall, his head bowed, his gangly arms bent at the elbows, his hands pressed to his face. As Bross approached, Lincoln noticed him and said, "I'm not very well."

Lincoln's look at that moment—the classic image of gloom—was familiar to everyone who knew him well. Such spells were just one thread in a curious fabric of behavior and thought that his friends called his "melancholy." He often wept in public and recited maudlin poetry. He told jokes and stories at odd times—he needed the laughs, he said, for his survival. As a young man he talked more than once of suicide, and as he grew older he said he saw the world as hard and grim, full of misery, made that way by fate and the forces of God. "No element of Mr. Lincoln's character," declared his colleague Henry Whitney, "was so marked, obvious and ingrained as his mysterious and profound melancholy." His law partner William Herndon said, "His melancholy dripped from him as he walked."

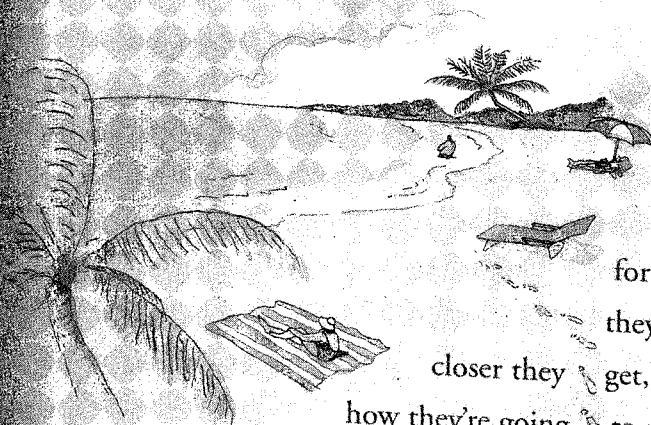
Joshua Wolf Shenk is the author of the forthcoming book Lincoln's Melancholy: How Depression Challenged a President and Fueled His Greatness (Houghton Mifflin), from which this article is adapted.

In 1998 I chanced upon a reference to Lincoln's melancholy in a sociologist's essay on suicide. I was intrigued enough to investigate the subject and discovered an exciting movement in the field of Lincoln studies. Actually, it was a rediscovery of very old terrain. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Lincoln's melancholy was widely accepted by students of his life, based as the subject was on countless reminiscences by people who knew him. But in the 1940s professional historians—taking what they regarded as a "scientific" approach to the study of the past—began to reject personal memories in favor of "hard" evidence. Their wildly inconsistent application of the rule suggests that they really wanted to toss out evidence they found distasteful. Still, the effect was profound and long-lasting.

Then, in the late 1980s and the 1990s, an emerging group of scholars began, independent of one another, to look anew at original accounts of Lincoln by the men and women who knew him. These historians, including Douglas Wilson, Rodney Davis, Michael Burlingame, and Allen Guelzo, had come of age in an era when the major oral histories of Lincoln were treated, as Davis has described it, "like nuclear waste." But they found to their surprise that such sources were more like rich mines that had been sealed off. They reassessed some accounts, dug up others that had been long forgotten, and began to publish these findings, many for the first time, in lavishly annotated volumes. This work felicitously coincided—post-Richard Nixon—with popular demand for frank portraits of public figures' private lives. Today the combination of basic materials and cultural mood allows us a surprising, and bracing, new view of Abraham Lincoln—one that has a great deal in common with the view of him held by his closest friends and colleagues.

Lincoln did suffer from what we now call depression, as modern clinicians, using the standard diagnostic criteria, uniformly agree. But this diagnosis is only the beginning of a story about

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how Lincoln wrestled with mental demons, and where it led him. Diagnosis, after all, seeks to assess a patient at just a moment in time, with the aim of treatment. But Lincoln's melancholy is part of a whole life story; exploring it can help us see that life more clearly, and discern its lessons. In a sense, what needs "treatment" is our own narrow ideas—of depression as an exclusively medical ailment that must be, and will be, squashed; of therapy as a thing dispensed only by professionals and measured only by a reduction of pain; and finally, of mental trials as a flaw in character and a disqualification for leadership.

Throughout its three major stages—which I call fear, engagement, and transcendence—Lincoln's melancholy upends such views. With Lincoln we have a man whose depression spurred him, painfully, to examine the core of his soul; whose hard work to stay alive helped him develop crucial skills and capacities, even as his depression lingered hauntingly; and whose inimitable character took great strength from the piercing insights of depression, the creative responses to it, and a spirit of humble determination forged over decades of deep suffering and earnest longing.

I. FEAR

The word appears in an age-old definition of melancholia: "fear and sadness without cause." To be more precise we could say "without *apparent* cause," or "*disproportionate* to apparent cause." Although this story is about melancholy throughout, the first part illustrates its dark heart, the querulous, dissatisfied, doubting experience often marked by periods of withdrawal and sometimes by utter collapse. With Lincoln it's instructive to see how he collapsed, but even more so to see how his collapses led him to a signal moment of self-understanding.

By 1835 Lincoln had lived for four years in New Salem, a village in central Illinois that backed up to a bluff over the Sangamon River. Twenty-six years old, he had made many friends there. That summer an epidemic of what doctors called "bilious fever"—typhoid, probably—spread through the area. Among those severely afflicted were Lincoln's friends the Rutledges. One of New Salem's founding families, they had run a tavern and boardinghouse where Lincoln stayed and took meals when he first arrived. He became friendly with Ann Rutledge, a bright, pretty young woman with golden hair and large blue eyes. In August of 1835 she took sick. Visiting her at her family's farm, Lincoln seemed deeply distressed, which made people wonder whether the two had a romantic, and not just a friendly, bond. After Lincoln's death such speculation would froth over into a messy controversy—one that cannot be, and need not be, resolved. Regardless of how he felt about Rutledge while she was alive, her sickness and death drew Lincoln to his emotional edge. Around the time of her burial a rainstorm, accompanied by unseasonable cold, shoved him over. "As to the condition of Lincoln's Mind after the death of Miss R.,"

Henry McHenry, a farmer in the area, recalled, "after that Event he seemed quite *changed*, he seemed *Retired*, & loved *Solitude*, he seemed wraped in *profound thought*, *indifferent*, to transpiring Events, had but Little to say, but would take his gun and wander off in the woods by him self, away from the association of even those he most esteemed, this gloom seemed to deepen for some time, so as to give anxiety to his friends in regard to his Mind."

Indeed, the villagers' anxiety was intense, both for Lincoln's immediate safety and for his long-term mental health. Lincoln "told Me that he felt like Committing Suicide often," remembered Mentor Graham, a schoolteacher, and his neighbors mobilized to keep him safe. One friend recalled, "Mr Lincolns friends ... were Compelled to keep watch and ward over Mr Lincoln, he being from the sudden shock somewhat temporarily deranged. We watched during storms—fogs—damp gloomy weather ... for fear of an accident." Some villagers worried that he'd end up insane. After several weeks an older couple in the area took him into their home. Bowling Green, the large, merry justice of the peace, and his wife, Nancy, took care of Lincoln for a week or two. When he had improved somewhat, they let him go, but he was, Mrs. Green said, "quite melancholy for months."

Was Lincoln's melancholy a "clinical depression"? Yes—as far as that concept goes. Certainly his condition in the summer of 1835 matches what the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* labels a major depressive

Modern clinicians agree that Lincoln suffered from depression. It's instructive to see how he collapsed, but even more so to see how his collapses led him to a signal moment of self-understanding.

episode. Such an episode is characterized by depressed mood, a marked decrease in pleasure, or both, for at least two weeks, and symptoms such as agitation, fatigue, feelings of worthlessness, and thoughts of death or suicide. Five and a half years later, in the winter of 1840–1841, Lincoln broke down again, and together these episodes suffice for modern clinicians to make an assessment of recurrent major depression.

Such labels can help us begin to reckon with Lincoln. Most basically, "clinical depression" means it was serious, no mere case of the blues. Someone who has had two episodes of major depression has a 70 percent chance of experiencing a third. And someone who's had three episodes has a 90 percent chance of having a fourth. Indeed, it became clear in Lincoln's late twenties that he had more than a



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passing condition. Richard Wilson, a fellow legislator in the Illinois state legislature, once told Lincoln, "I found him amiable and fun-loving. One day Lincoln told him something surprising. Lincoln said 'that although he appeared to enjoy life rapturously, still he was the victim of terrible melancholy.'" Wilson recalled, "He sought company, and indulged in fun and hilarity without restraint, or stint as to time[.] Still when by himself, he told me that he was so overcome with mental depression, that he never dare carry a knife in his pocket."

Yet as we learn about Lincoln, a fixation on modern categories should not distract us from the actual events of his life and the frameworks that he and his contemporaries applied to his condition. In his late twenties Lincoln was developing a distinct reputation as a depressive. At the

same time, he was scrambling up the ladder of success, emerging as a leader of the Illinois Whig Party and a savvy, self-educated young lawyer. Today this juxtaposition may seem surprising, but in the nineteenth-century conception of melancholy, genius and gloom were often part of the same overall picture. True, a person with a melancholy temperament had been fated with an awful burden—but also, in Lord Byron's phrase, with a "fearful gift." The burden was a sadness and despair that could tip into a state of disease. But the gift was a capacity for depth and wisdom.

Both sides of melancholy are evident in a poem on suicide that Lincoln apparently wrote in his twenties. Discussed by his contemporaries but long undiscovered, the poem, unsigned, recently came to light through the efforts of the scholar Richard Lawrence Miller, who was aided by old records that have been made newly available. Without an original manuscript or a letter in which ownership is claimed, no unsigned piece can be attributed definitively to an author. But the evidence points strongly to Lincoln. The poem was published in the year cited by Lincoln's closest friend, Joshua Speed, and its syntax, tone, meter, and other qualities are characteristic of Lincoln.

The poem ran in the August 25, 1838, issue of the *Sangamo Journal*, under the title "The Suicide's Soliloquy." At the top a note explains that the lines of verse were found "near the bones" of an apparent suicide in a deep forest by

the Sangamon River. The conceit, in other words, is that this is a suicide note. As the poem begins, the anguished narrator announces his intention.

Here, where the lonely hooting owl
Sends forth his midnight moans,
Fierce wolves shall o'er my carcase growl,
Or buzzards pick my bones.

No fellow-man shall learn my fate,
Or where my ashes lie;
Unless by beasts drawn round their bait,
Or by the ravens' cry.

Yes! I've resolved the deed to do,
And this the place to do it:
This heart I'll rush a dagger through
Though I in hell should rue it!

Often understood as an emotional condition, depression is to those who experience it characterized largely by its cognitive patterns. The novelist William Styron has likened his depression to a storm in his brain, punctuated by thunderclaps of thought—self-critical, fearful, despairing. Lincoln clearly knew these mental strains (he wrote once of “that *intensity* of thought, which will some times wear the sweetest idea thread-bare and turn it to the bitterness of death”); he knew how, oppressed by the clamor, people often become hopeless, and seek the most drastic solution.

To ease me of *this* power to *think*,
That through my bosom raves,
I'll headlong leap from hell's high brink
And wallow in its waves.

This poem illustrates the complex quality of Lincoln's melancholy in his late twenties. He articulated a sense of himself as degraded and humiliated but also, somehow, as special and grand. And though the character in the poem in the end chooses death by the dagger, the author—using his tool, the pen—showed an impulse toward an artful life. Lincoln's poem expressed both his connection with a morbid state of mind and, to some extent, a mastery over it. But the mastery would be short-lived.

Like the first, Lincoln's second breakdown came after a long period of intense work. In 1835 he had been studying law; in the winter of 1840–1841 he was trying to keep the debt-ridden State of Illinois from collapsing (and his political career with it). On top of this came a profound personal stress. The precipitating causes are hard to identify precisely, in part because cause and effect in depressive episodes can be hard to separate. Ordinarily we insist on a narrative line: factor *x* led to reaction *y*. But in a depressive crisis we might feel bad because something has gone awry. Or we might make things go awry because we feel so bad. Or both.

For Lincoln in this winter many things were awry. Even as he faced the possibility that his political career was sunk, it seemed likely that he was inextricably bound to a woman he didn't love (Mary Todd) and that Joshua Speed was going to either move away to Kentucky or stay in Illinois and marry Matilda Edwards, the young woman whom Lincoln said he really wanted but could not even approach, because of his bond with Todd. Then came a stretch of intensely cold weather, which, Lincoln later wrote, “my experience clearly proves to be verry severe on defective nerves.” Once again he began to speak openly about his misery, hopelessness, and thoughts of suicide—alarming his friends. “Lincoln went Crazy,” Speed recalled. “—had to remove razors from his room—take away all Knives and other such dangerous things—&—it was terrible.”

In January of 1841 Lincoln submitted himself to the care of a medical doctor, spending several hours a day with

Dr. Anson Henry, whom he called “necessary to my existence.” Although few details of the treatment are extant, he probably went through what a prominent physician of the time called “the desolating tortures of officious medication.” When he emerged, on January 20, he was “reduced and emaciated in appearance,” wrote a young lawyer in town named James Conkling. On January 23 Lincoln wrote to his law partner in Washington: “I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on the earth. Whether I shall ever be better I can not tell; I awfully forebode I shall not. To remain as I am is impossible; I must die or be better, it appears to me.”

This spare, direct letter captures the core of depression as forcefully as the Gettysburg Address would distill the essence of the American experiment. It tells what depression is like: to feel not only miserable but the *most* miserable; to feel a strange, muted sense of awful power; to believe plainly that either the misery must end or life will—and yet to fear the misery will not end. The fact that Lincoln spoke thus, not to a counselor or a dear friend but to his law partner, indicates how relentlessly he insisted on acknowledging his fears. Through his late twenties and early thirties he drove deeper and deeper into them, hovering over what, according to Albert Camus, is the only serious question human beings have to deal with. He asked whether he could live, whether he could face life's misery.

Finally he decided that he must. Speed recorded the dramatic exchange that began when he came to Lincoln and told him he would die unless he rallied. Lincoln replied that he *could* kill himself, that he was not afraid to die. Yet, he said, he had an “irrepressible desire” to accomplish something while he lived. He wanted to connect his name with the great events of his generation, and “so impress himself upon them as to link his name with something that would redound to the interest of his fellow man.” This was no mere wish, Lincoln said, but what he “desired to live for.”

II. ENGAGEMENT

In his middle years Lincoln turned from the question of *whether he could* live to *how he would* live. Building bridges out from his tortured self, he engaged with the psychological culture of his time, investigating who he was, how he might change, and what he must endure. Having seen what he wished to live for, Lincoln suffered at the prospect that he might never achieve it. Even so, he worked diligently to improve himself, developing self-understanding, discipline, and strategies for succor that would become the foundation of his character.

The melancholy did not go away during this period but, rather, took a new form. Beginning in his mid-thirties Lincoln began to fall into what a law clerk called his “blue spells.” A decade later the cast of his face and body when in repose suggested deep, abiding gloom to nearly all who

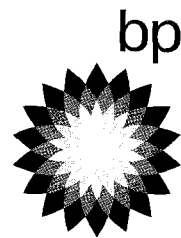
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crossed his path. In his memoirs the Illinois lawyer Henry C. Whitney recounted an afternoon at court in Bloomington, Illinois: "I was sitting with John T. Stuart"—Lincoln's first law partner—"while a case was being tried, and our conversation was, at the moment, about Lincoln, when Stuart remarked that he was a hopeless victim of melancholy. I expressed surprise, to which Stuart replied; 'Look at him, now.'" Whitney turned and saw Lincoln sitting by himself in a corner, "wrapped in abstraction and gloom." Whitney watched him for a while. "It appeared," he wrote, "as if he was pursuing in his mind some specific, sad subject, regularly and systematically through various sinuosities, and his sad face would assume, at times, deeper phases of grief; but no relief came from dark and despairing melancholy, till he was roused by the breaking up of court, when he emerged from his cave of gloom and came back, like one awakened from sleep, to the world in which he lived, again."

In one sense these spells indicate Lincoln's melancholy. But they may also represent a response to it—the visible end of Lincoln's effort to contain his dark feelings and thoughts, to wrestle privately with his moods until they passed or lightened. "With depression," writes the psychologist David B. Cohen, "recovery may be a matter of shifting from protest to more effective ways of mastering helplessness." Lincoln was effective, to a point. He worked well and consistently at his law practice, always rousing himself from gloom for

work. He and Mary Lincoln (whom he had wed in 1842) had four boys. He was elected to a term in the United States Congress. Yet his reaction to this honor—he wrote, "Though I am very grateful to our friends, for having done it, [it] has not pleased me as much as I expected"—suggested that through booms and busts, Lincoln continued to see life as hard.

Indeed, he developed a philosophical melancholy. "He felt very strongly," said his friend Joseph Gillespie, "that there was more of discomfort than real happiness in human existence under the most favorable circumstances and the general current of his reflections was in that channel." Once a girl named Rosa Haggard, the daughter of a hotel proprietor in Winchester, Illinois, asked Lincoln to sign her autograph album. Lincoln took the book and wrote,

To Rosa
You are young, and I am older;
You are hopeful, I am not—
Enjoy life, ere it grows colder—
Pluck the roses ere they rot.

At a time when newspapers were stuffed with ads for substances to cure all manner of ailments, it wouldn't have been unusual for Lincoln to seek help at a pharmacy. He had a charge account at the Corneau and Diller drugstore, at 122 South Sixth Street in Springfield, where he bought a number of medications, including opiates, camphor, and sarsaparilla. On one occasion he bought fifty cents' worth of cocaine, and he sometimes took the "blue mass"—a mercury pill that was believed to clear the body of black bile.

To whatever extent Lincoln used medicines, his essential view of melancholy discounted the possibility of transformation by an external agent. He believed that his suffering proceeded inexorably from his constitution—that, in a phrase he used in connection with a friend, he was "naturally of a nervous temperament." Through no fault of his own, he believed, he suffered more than others.

Some strategies in response were apparent. As noted, work was a first refuge; he advised a friend, "I think if I were you, in case my mind were not exactly right, I would avoid being *idle*." When he was off duty, two things gave him most relief. He told stories and jokes, studiously gathering new material from talented peers and printed sources. And he gave vent to his melancholy by reading, reciting, and composing poetry that dwelled on themes of death, despair, and human futility. Yet, somewhat in the way that insulin allows diabetics to function without eliminating the root problem, this strategy gave Lincoln relief without taking away his need for it.

Consider his favorite poem, which he began

ASIATIC LILIES

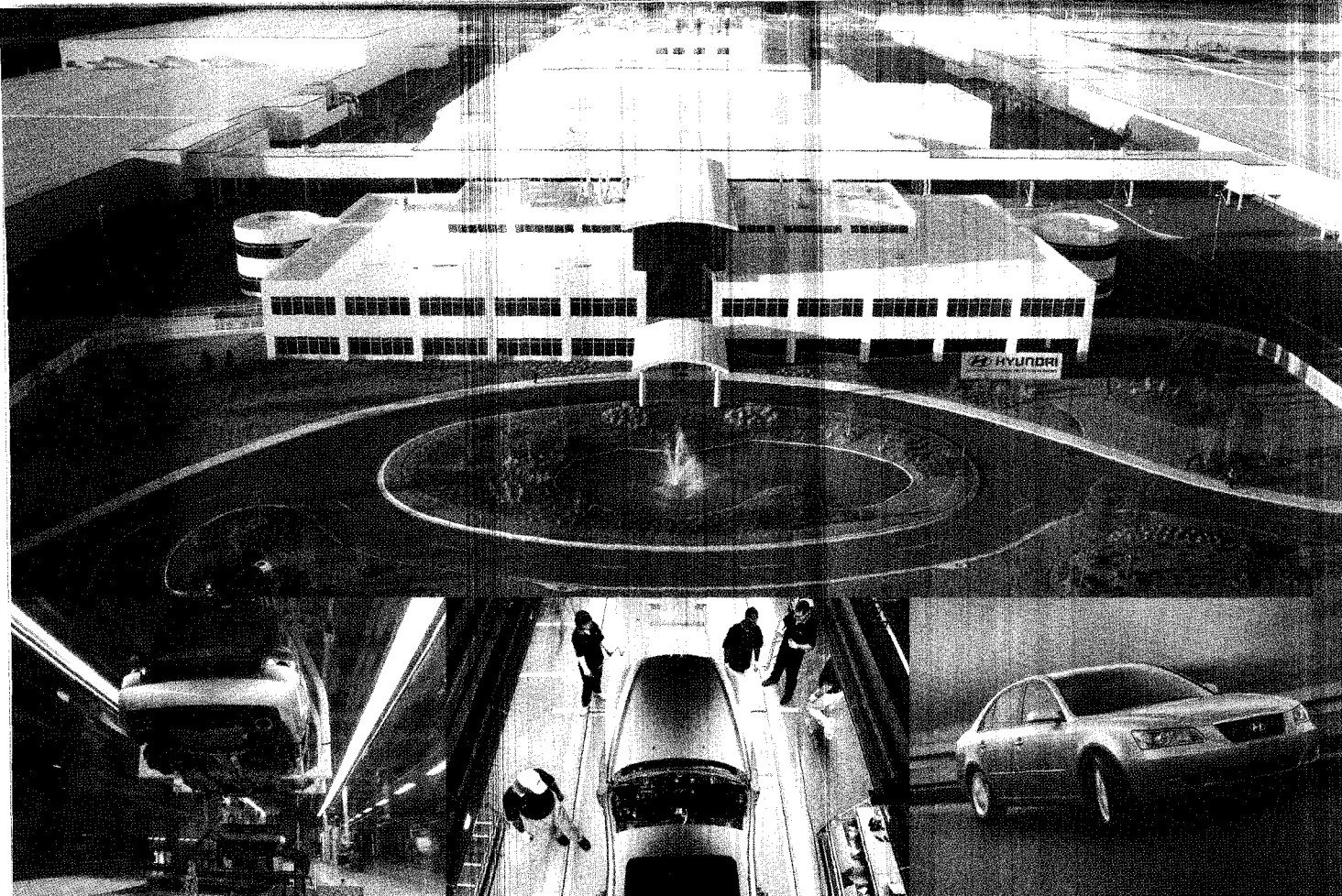
The six-foot stalks, like Amazon spears
thrust into the bull's-eye of a barrel sawed in half,
all tilt east. They are javelins
thrown by the rising moon.

Tasseled with three or four crimson blossoms,
they advertise a roadside nursery
the way a school basketball team, waving scarlet varsity jackets
aloft, implores alumni to open their wallets.

I would buy an entire quiver
trimmed so fetchingly, and so accurate.
I would picket my patio with severe blood-blooms
and hide like a mandarin behind my army.

—JOYCE PESEROFF

Joyce Peseroff is the editor of Simply Lasting: Writers on Jane Kenyon. Her new collection of poems, Eastern Mountain Time, will be published early next year.



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to recite often in his mid-thirties. It was in one sense, as a colleague observed, "a reflex in poetic form of the deep melancholy of his soul," and in another a way to manage that melancholy. One story of his recitations comes from Lois Newhall, a member of the Newhall Family troupe of singers. During an Illinois tour in the late 1840s the troupe encountered Lincoln and two colleagues, who were traveling the same circuit giving political speeches. They ended up spending eight days together, and on their last they sat up late singing songs.

As the night wore down, Lincoln's colleagues started pressing him to sing. Lincoln was embarrassed and demurred, but he finally said, "I'll tell you what I'll do for you. You girls have been so kind singing for us. I'll repeat to you my favorite poem." Leaning against the doorjamb, which looked small behind his lanky frame, and with his eyes half closed, Lincoln recited from memory.

O[h] why should the spirit of mortal be proud!
Like a swift, fleeting meteor—a fast-flying cloud—
A flash of the lightning—a break of the wave—
He passeth from life to his rest in the grave.

The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,
Be scattered around, and together be laid;
And the young and the old, and the low and the high
Shall molder to dust and together shall lie.

Lincoln first came across the poem in the early 1830s. Then, in 1845, he saw it in a newspaper, cut it out, and committed it to memory. He didn't know who wrote it, because it had been published without attribution. He repeated the lines so often that people suspected they were his own. "Beyond all question, I am not the author," he wrote. "I would give all I am worth, and go in debt, to be able to write so fine a piece as I think that is." When he was president Lincoln learned that the poem had been written by William Knox, a Scotsman who died in 1825.

The last two verses of the poem were Lincoln's favorites.

Yea! Hope and despondency, pleasure and pain,
Are mingled together in sun-shine and rain;
And the smile and the tear, and the song and the dirge,
Still follow each other, like surge upon surge.

'Tis the wink of an eye, 'tis the draught of a breath,
From the blossoms of health, to the paleness of death.
From the gilded saloon, to the bier and the shroud
Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud!

When Lincoln finished, the room was still. "I know that for myself," Lois Newhall recalled, "I was so impressed with the poem that I felt more like crying than talking." She asked, "Mr. Lincoln, who wrote that?" He told her he didn't know, but that if she liked, he would write out a copy of the poem for her. She was eating pancakes the next morning when she felt something behind her. A great big hand came

around her left side and covered hers. Then, with his other hand, Lincoln laid a long piece of blue paper beside her.

III. TRANSCENDENCE

In his mid-forties the dark soil of Lincoln's melancholy began to yield fruit. When he threw himself into the fight against the extension of slavery, the same qualities that had long brought him so much trouble played a defining role. The suffering he had endured lent him clarity and conviction, creative skills in the face of adversity, and a faithful humility that helped him guide the nation through its greatest peril.

CLARITY. Some people, William Herndon observed, see the world "ornamented with beauty, life, and action; and hence more or less false and inexact." Lincoln, on the other hand, "crushed the unreal, the inexact, the hollow, and the sham"—"Everything came to him in its precise shape and color." Such keen vision often brought Lincoln pain; being able to look troubling reality straight in the eye also proved a great strength.

The hunch of old Romantic poets—that gloom coexists with potential for insight—has been bolstered by modern research. In an influential 1979 experiment two psychologists, Lyn Abramson and Lauren Alloy, set up a game in their lab, putting subjects in front of a console with lights and a button, with instructions to make a particular light flash as often as possible. Afterward, asked how much control they had had, "normal," or nondepressed, subjects gave answers that hinged on their success in the game. If they did well, they tended to say they'd had plenty of control; if they did poorly, very little. In other words, these subjects took credit for good scores and deflected the blame for poor scores.

But the depressed subjects saw things differently. Whether or not they had done well, they tended to believe that they'd had no control. And they were correct: the "game" was a fiction, the lights largely unaffected by the participants' efforts.

According to the dominant model of depression, these findings made no sense. How could a mental disease characterized by errors in thinking confer advantages in perception? Abramson and Alloy pointed to a phenomenon called "depressive realism," or the "sadder but wiser" effect. Though psychiatry had long equated mental health with clear thinking, it turns out that happiness is often characterized by muddy inaccuracies. "Much research suggests," Alloy has written, "that when they are not depressed, people are highly vulnerable to illusions, including unrealistic optimism, overestimation of themselves, and an exaggerated sense of their capacity to control events. The same research indicates that depressed people's perceptions and judgments are often less biased."

Of course, whether such "less biased" judgments are appreciated depends on the circumstances. Take a man



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who goes to a picnic, notices only ants and grass stains, and ignores the baskets full of bread and wine. We would call him a pessimist—usually pejoratively. But suppose a danger arises, and the same man proclaims it. In this instance he is surely more valuable than the optimist who sits dreamily admiring the daisies.

In 1850s America an old conflict over slavery began to take on a new intensity, and in 1854 Lincoln joined the fight. That year Senator Stephen A. Douglas engineered the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, which had prohibited slavery in a large swath of the Northwest, and laid down a policy of “popular sovereignty,” which delegated slavery policy to local voters. To Lincoln the new policy was a Trojan horse, an ostensibly benign measure that in fact would stealthily spread slavery through the nation. He *thought the conflict must be engaged*. “Slavery,” he said, “is founded in the selfishness of man’s nature—opposition to it, is his love of justice. These principles are an eternal antagonism; and when brought into collision so fiercely, as slavery extension brings them, shocks, and throes, and convulsions must ceaselessly follow.”

Lincoln began to speak openly about thoughts of suicide. “Had to remove razors from his room—take away all Knives and other such dangerous things—&—it was terrible,” his closest friend recalled.

In Douglas, whom he battled repeatedly through the 1850s, Lincoln faced a preternatural optimist, who really thought that moral and practical choices about slavery could be put off forever. In October of 1854, in a preview of their epic debates four summers later, Lincoln squared off against him in Springfield, Illinois. The physical contrast between the two men underlined their temperamental differences. Douglas stood five feet four inches, a foot shorter than Lincoln, and seemed packed with charisma. He had penetrating eyes and dark hair that he styled in a pompadour. Lincoln was not just tall and gaunt but a truly odd physical specimen, with cartoonishly long arms and legs; he looked as if he wore stilts under his trousers. He spoke with a kind of high-piping voice, but at the pace of a Kentucky drawl. Before he rose to speak, he looked, wrote a reporter named Horace White, “so overspread with sadness that I thought that Shakespeare’s melancholy Jacques had been translated from the forest of Arden to the capital of Illinois.”

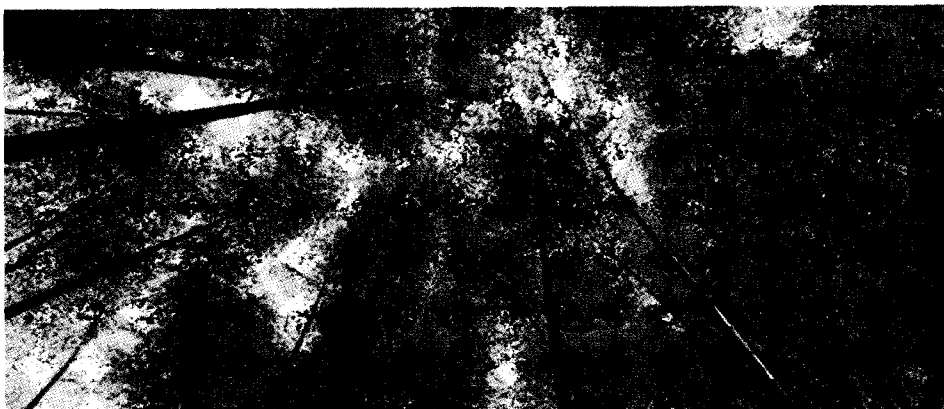
The melancholy mattered because his observers could sense the depth of feeling that infused Lincoln’s oratory.

Others could hit all the right notes and spark thunderous applause, but Lincoln’s eloquence “produced conviction in others because of the conviction of the speaker himself,” White explained. “His listeners felt that he believed every word he said, and that, like Martin Luther, he would go to the stake rather than abate one jot or tittle of it.”

Opposing the *extension* of slavery on moral grounds but conceding its *existence* as a practical necessity, Lincoln found himself in an *unenviable spot*. To supporters of slavery he was a dangerous radical, to abolitionists an equivocating hack. His political party, the Whigs, was dying off, and a new organization—which eventually took shape as the Republicans—had to be built from scratch out of divergent groups. But Lincoln stayed his course with an argument that reached the primary force of narrative. The United States, he said, had been founded with a great idea and a grave imperfection. The idea was liberty as the natural right of all people. The flaw—the “cancer” in the nation’s body—was the gross violation of liberty by human slavery. The Founders had recognized the evil, Lincoln said, and sought to restrict it, with the aim of its gradual abolition. The spirit of the Declaration of Independence, with its linchpin statement that “all men are created equal,” was meant to be realized, to the greatest extent possible, by each succeeding generation. “They meant to set up a standard maxim for free society,” Lincoln said, “which should be familiar to all, and revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly labored for ... even though never perfectly attained.”

This political vision drew power from personal experience. For Lincoln had long applied the same principle to his own life: that is, continuing struggle to realize an ideal, knowing that it could never be perfectly attained. Individuals, he had learned from his own “severe experience,” could succeed in “the great struggle of life” only by enduring failures and plodding on with a vision of improvement. This attitude sustained Lincoln through his ignominious defeats in the 1850s (he twice lost bids for the U.S. Senate), and it braced him for the trials that lay ahead. Prepared for defeat, and even for humiliation, he insisted on seeing the truth of both his personal circumstances and the national condition. And where the optimists of his time would fail, he would succeed, envisioning and articulating a durable idea of free society.

CREATIVITY. On February 25, 1860, Lincoln stepped off a train in Jersey City, New Jersey. He claimed his trunk, made his way to a crowded pier, and caught a ferry to Manhattan Island, where in two days he would deliver a speech in the Cooper Union’s Great Hall. It was the chance of his career—an audience before the lords of finance and culture in the nation’s media capital. But when Lincoln arrived on the island and called on a Republican colleague, he wore a “woe-begone look” on his face and carried a dour message: he said he feared he’d made a mistake in coming to New



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York and that he had to hole up and work on his speech. "Otherwise he was sure he would make a failure."

Lincoln's literary prowess is as well appreciated as any aspect of his life; like so many of his rhetorical efforts, his stand at Cooper Union would be a triumph. On February 27 more than 1,500 people filed into the Great Hall. As soon as Lincoln began to speak they were engrossed, and by his closing line—"Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it"—they were spellbound. "No man ever before made such an impression on his first appeal to a New York audience," said the next day's *New York Tribune*.

Lincoln said that he *could* kill himself; yet he had an "irrepressible desire" to accomplish something. He wanted to link his name with great events—ones that would "redound to the interest of his fellow man."

Yet Lincoln afterward seemed impervious to the praise. "No man in all New York," said Charles Nott, a young Republican who escorted him back to his hotel, "appeared that night more simple, more unassuming, more modest, more unpretentious, more conscious of his own defects." Nott saw Lincoln as a "sad and lonely man."

The link between mental illness and creativity is supported by a bevy of historical examples—Charles Darwin, Emily Dickinson, Benjamin Disraeli, and William T. Sherman, among many others from Lincoln's time alone, suffered from mood disorders—and a wealth of modern research. Many studies have found higher rates of mood disorders among artists, and the qualities associated with art among the tendencies of mentally disordered minds. But the dynamic is a curious one. As the psychologist and scholar Kay Redfield Jamison has written, "There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that, compared to 'normal' individuals, artists, writers, and creative people in general, are both psychologically 'sicker'—that is, they score higher on a wide variety of measures of psychopathology—and psychologically healthier (for example, they show quite elevated scores on measures of self-confidence and ego strength)."

With Lincoln sadness did not just coexist with strength—these qualities ran together. Just as death supports new life in a healthy ecosystem, Lincoln's self-negation fueled his peculiar confidence. His despair lay under a distinct hope; his overwhelming melancholy fed into a supple creative power, which allowed him not merely to see the truth of

his circumstances but to express it in a stirring, meaningful way. The events in New York help illustrate the basic progression: Wariness and doubt led Lincoln into a kind of personal crisis, from which he turned to work. Afterward he largely turned aside acclaim to return to wariness and doubt, and the cycle began again.

After Lincoln's election as president in November of 1860, the troughs of despair became deeper, and the need for creative response became all the more intense. Now his internal questions of self-worth and his abstract feelings of obligation were leavened by direct responsibility for the nation in a crisis of secession, which led soon after his inauguration to war. The trouble fell hard on him. The burdens of his office were so great, he said, "that, could I have anticipated them, I would not have believed it possible to survive."

Observing Lincoln in an hour of trial, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote that he was unsteady but strong, like a wire cable that sways in storms but holds fast. In this metaphor we can see how Lincoln's weakness connected to a special kind of strength. In 1862, amid one of many military calamities, Senator O. H. Browning came to the White House. The president was in his library, writing, and had left instructions that he was not to be disturbed. Browning went in anyway and found the president looking terrible—"weary, care-worn, and troubled." Browning wrote in his diary, "I remarked that I felt concerned about him—regretted that troubles crowded so heavily upon him, and feared his health was suffering." Lincoln took his friend's hand and said, with a deep cadence of sadness, "Browning I must die sometime." "He looked very sad," Browning wrote. "We parted I believe both of us with tears in our eyes." A clinician reading this passage could easily identify mental pathology in a man who looked haggard and distressed and volunteered morbid thoughts. However, one crucial detail upsets such a simple picture: Browning found Lincoln *writing*—doing the work that not only helped steer his nation through its immediate struggle but also became a compass for future generations.

HUMILITY. Throughout his life Lincoln's response to suffering—for all the success it brought him—led to greater suffering still. When as a young man he stepped back from the brink of suicide, deciding that he must live to do some meaningful work, this sense of purpose sustained him; but it also led him into a wilderness of doubt and dismay, as he asked, with vexation, *what* work he would do and *how* he would do it. This pattern was repeated in the 1850s, when his work against the extension of slavery gave him a sense of purpose but also fueled a nagging sense of failure. Then, finally, political success led him to the White House, where he was tested as few had been before.

Lincoln responded with both humility and determination. The humility came from a sense that whatever ship carried him on life's rough waters, *he* was not the captain



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but merely a subject of the divine force—call it fate or God or the “Almighty Architect” of existence. The determination came from a sense that however humble his station, Lincoln was no idle passenger but a sailor on deck with a job to do. In his strange combination of profound deference to divine authority and a willful exercise of his own meager power, Lincoln achieved transcendent wisdom.

Elizabeth Keckley, Mary Lincoln’s dressmaker, once told of watching the president drag himself into the room where she was fitting the First Lady. “His step was slow and heavy, and his face sad,” Keckley recalled. “Like a tired child he threw himself upon a sofa, and shaded his eyes with his hands. He was a complete picture of dejection.” He had just returned from the War Department, he said, where the news was “dark, dark everywhere.” Lincoln then took a small Bible from a stand near the sofa and began to read. “A quarter of an hour passed,” Keckley remembered, “and on glancing at the sofa the face of the president seemed more cheerful. The dejected look was gone; in fact, the countenance was lighted up with new resolution and hope.” Wanting to see what he was reading, Keckley pretended she had dropped something and went behind where Lincoln was sitting so that she could look over his shoulder. It was the Book of Job.

“Everything came to him in its precise shape and color,” Lincoln’s law partner observed. Such keen vision brought Lincoln pain; being able to look troubling reality straight in the eye also proved a great strength.

Throughout history a glance to the divine has often been the first and last impulse of suffering people. “Man is born broken,” the playwright Eugene O’Neill wrote. “He lives by mending. The grace of God is glue!” Today the connection between spiritual and psychological well-being is often passed over by psychologists and psychiatrists, who consider their work a branch of secular medicine and science. But for most of Lincoln’s lifetime scientists assumed there was some relationship between mental and spiritual life.

Lincoln, too, connected his mental well-being to divine forces. As a young man he saw how religion could ameliorate life’s blows, even as he found the consolation of faith elusive. An infidel—a dissenter from orthodox Christianity—he resisted popular dogma. But many of history’s greatest believers have also been its fiercest doubters. Lincoln charted his own theological course to a living vision of how frail, imperfect mortals could turn their suffering selves to

the service of something greater and find solace—not in any personal satisfaction or glory but in dutiful mission.

An original theological thinker, Lincoln discounted the idea, common among evangelicals, that sin could be wiped out through confession or repentance. Rather, he believed, as William Herndon explained, “that God could not forgive; that punishment has to follow the sin.” This view fitted with both the stern, unforgiving God of Calvinism, with which Lincoln had been raised, and the mechanistic notion of a universe governed by fixed laws. But unlike the Calvinists, who disclaimed any possibility of grace for human beings not chosen for that fate, Lincoln did see a chance of improvement. And unlike some fatalists, who renounced any claim to a moral order, Lincoln saw how man’s reason could discern purpose even in the movement of a vast machine that grinds and cuts and mashes all who interfere with it. Just as a child learns to pull his hand from a fire, people can learn when they are doing something that is not in accord with the wider, unseen order. To Lincoln, Herndon explained, “suffering was medicinal & educational.” In other words, it could be an agent of growth.

In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James writes of “sick souls” who turn from a sense of wrongness to a power greater than they. Lincoln showed the simple wisdom of this, as the burden of his work as president brought home a visceral and fundamental connection with something greater than he. He repeatedly called himself an “instrument” of a larger power—which he sometimes identified as the people of the United States, and other times as God—and said that he had been charged with “so vast, and so sacred a trust” that “he felt that he had no moral right to shrink; nor even to count the chances of his own life, in what might follow.” When friends said they feared his assassination, he said, “God’s will be done. I am in His hands.”

The griefs of his presidency furthered this humble sense. He lost friends and colleagues to the war, and in February of 1862 he lost his eleven-year-old son, Willie. In this vulnerable period Lincoln was influenced by the Reverend Phineas D. Gurley, whose Presbyterian church he attended (but never joined). In his eulogy for Willie, Gurley preached that “in the hour of trial” one must look to “Him who sees the end from the beginning and doeth all things well.” With confidence in God, Gurley said, “our sorrows will be sanctified and made a blessing to our souls, and by and by we shall have occasion to say with blended gratitude and rejoicing, ‘It is good for us that we have been afflicted.’” Lincoln asked Gurley to write out a copy of the eulogy. He would hold to this idea as if it were a life raft.

Yet Lincoln never used God to duck responsibility. Every day presented scores of decisions—on personnel, on policy, on the movement of troops and the direction of executive departments. So much of what today is delegated

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to political staffs and civil servants then required a direct decision from the president. He controlled patronage, from the envoy to China to the postmaster in St. Louis. His desk was piled high with court-martial cases to review and military dispatches to monitor. In all his choices he had to rely on his own judgment in accordance with law, custom, prudence, and compassion. As much as his attention focused on an unseen realm, Lincoln's emphasis remained strictly on the material world of cause and effect. "These are not ... the days of miracles," he said, "and I suppose it will be granted that I am not to expect a direct revelation." Lincoln did not expect God to take him by the hand. On the contrary, he said, "I must study the plain physical facts of the case, ascertain what is possible and learn what appears to be wise and right."

Lincoln's peculiar vision of the sacred led him to defy the conventions of his day. For centuries settlers in the New World had assured themselves that they were special in God's eyes. They were a "City upon a Hill," in John Winthrop's phrase, decidedly chosen, like the Israelites of old. Lincoln turned this on its head when he said, "I shall be most happy indeed if I shall be an humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and of this, his almost chosen people, for perpetuating the object of that great struggle." The country, Lincoln said, was *almost* chosen. Out of that phrase emerged a crucial strain of Lincoln's thinking. As others invoked the favor of God in both the North and the South, Lincoln opened a space between mortal works and divine intention. Among his papers, after his death, his secretaries found this undated statement that has come to be known as the "Meditation on the Divine Will."

The will of God prevails—In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both *may* be, and one *must* be wrong. God can not be *for*, and *against* the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party—and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect this

After this first passage the handwriting grows shakier; the words practically tremble with the thoughts they express. First Lincoln crossed out the last word he had written.

His purpose. I am almost ready to say this is probably true—that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet—By his mere quiet power, on the minds of the now contestants, He could have either *saved*

or *destroyed* the Union without a human contest—
Yet the contest began—And having begun
He could give the final victory to either side
any day—Yet the contest proceeds—

Lincoln's clarity came in part from his uncertainty. It is hard to overestimate just how unusual this was, and how risky and unpopular his views often were. Most religious thinkers of the time, the historian of religion Mark Noll explains, not only assumed God's favor but assumed that they could read his will.

"How was it," Noll asks, "that this man who never joined a church and who read only a little theology could, on occasion, give expression to profound theological interpretations of the War between the States?" Viewing Lincoln through the lens of his melancholy, we see one cogent explanation: he was always inclined to look at the full truth of a situation, assessing both what could be known and what remained in doubt. When faced with uncertainty he had the patience, endurance, and vigor to stay in that place of tension, and the courage to be alone.

As his presidency wore on, his burden grew heavier and heavier, sometimes seeming to threaten Lincoln's sanity. The war consumed a nation, dividing not only the two opposing sections but, increasingly, the northern states of the Union. Emancipation became a reality, which only inflamed the conflict. Lincoln became increasingly isolated. But he continued to turn from his suffering to the lessons it gave him. Throughout his term he faced the prospect of humiliating defeat, but he continued to work for just victory.

Many popular philosophies propose that suffering can be beaten simply, quickly, and clearly. Popular biographies often express the same view. Many writers, faced with the unhappiness of a heroic figure, make sure to find some crucible in which that bad feeling is melted into something new. "Biographies tend conventionally to be structured as crisis-and-recovery narratives," the critic Louis Menand writes, "in which the subject undergoes a period of disillusionment or adversity, and then has a 'breakthrough' or arrives at a 'turning point' before going on to achieve whatever sort of greatness obtains." Lincoln's melancholy doesn't lend itself to such a narrative. No point exists after which the melancholy dissolved—not in January of 1841; not during his middle age; and not at his political resurgence, beginning in 1854. Whatever greatness Lincoln achieved cannot be explained as a triumph over personal suffering. Rather, it must be accounted an outgrowth of the same system that produced that suffering. This is a story not of transformation but of integration. Lincoln didn't do great work because he solved the problem of his melancholy; the problem of his melancholy was all the more fuel for the fire of his great work. ▀

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ROY AND HIS ROCK

Roy Moore, the "Ten Commandments Judge," has embarked on an odyssey that is taking him and his controversial monument far beyond his home state of Alabama. He wants the Republican Party to bow down

BY JOSHUA GREEN

Illustration by Steve Brodner

.....

Like a lot of celebrities, the Rock is smaller than you expect it to be. It's only about waist high. But it's sturdy and elegant nonetheless, rough in some places, smooth as glass in others. Though it's famous for stoking controversy, most people are moved to awestruck silence when they see it up close. It conveys grandeur and permanence. Even in its present surroundings, strapped to a flatbed that's littered with strips of dying turf and a stray tombstone, the Rock is magnificent.

It was meant to be so. You can see this in the detail, from the lofty inscriptions (Washington, Jefferson) to the quality of stone from which it was cut. When you build a monument in the Deep South, you normally get your granite from a quarry in Georgia. But the Rock is carved in Barre granite, from Vermont—the finest in the world, practically flawless in its consistency and almost as hard as sapphire. When you are paying obeisance to God, how could anything less suffice?

It doesn't *look* that heavy. That's what you think when the Rock is finally at rest. Then, if you're on tour with it, you see the twenty-three-foot crane on the back of the International flatbed jerk slowly to life and the entire contraption, which resembles a folded crab's claw, groan under the strain of 5,280 pounds of Barre granite. Even the pious tend to take a step backward. Or, if it is at home in Alabama, as it is now, a fifty-seven-foot yellow I-beam crane that spans the ceiling of the Clark Memorials warehouse drops down to retrieve the Rock from its chariot, and even this one—a five-ton crane!—buckles visibly under the weight. The Rock is so heavy that it has begun to slip the bond of the Italian industrial epoxy that fastens it to its granite base; the lead spacers beneath it that prevent the stone from cracking have been pounded as thin as a sheet of paper.

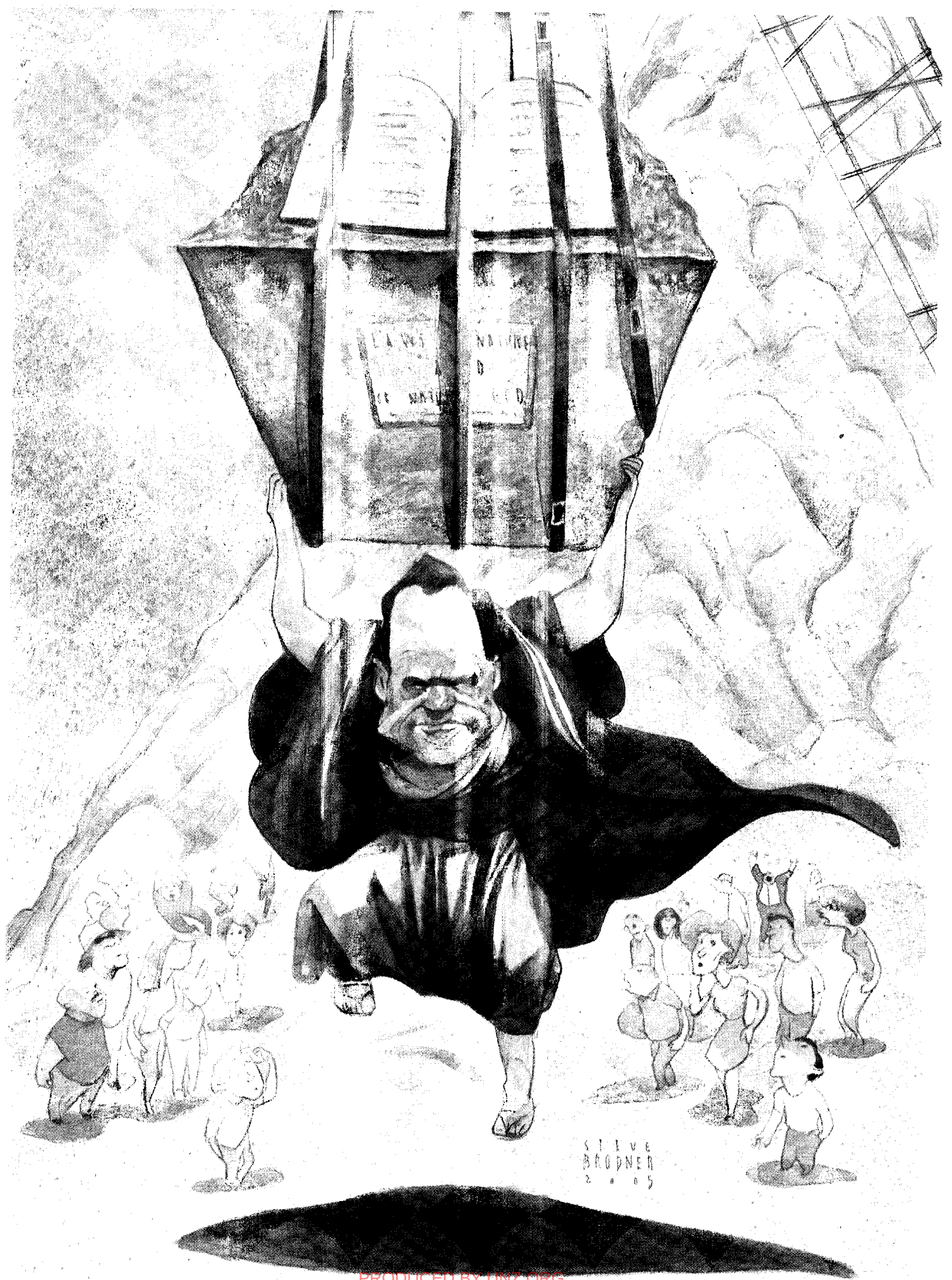
After thousands of miles the Rock has arrived for maintenance and cleansing. As it sways precariously beneath the five-tonner, a small priesthood of caretakers will guide it to a washbasin and gently remove the

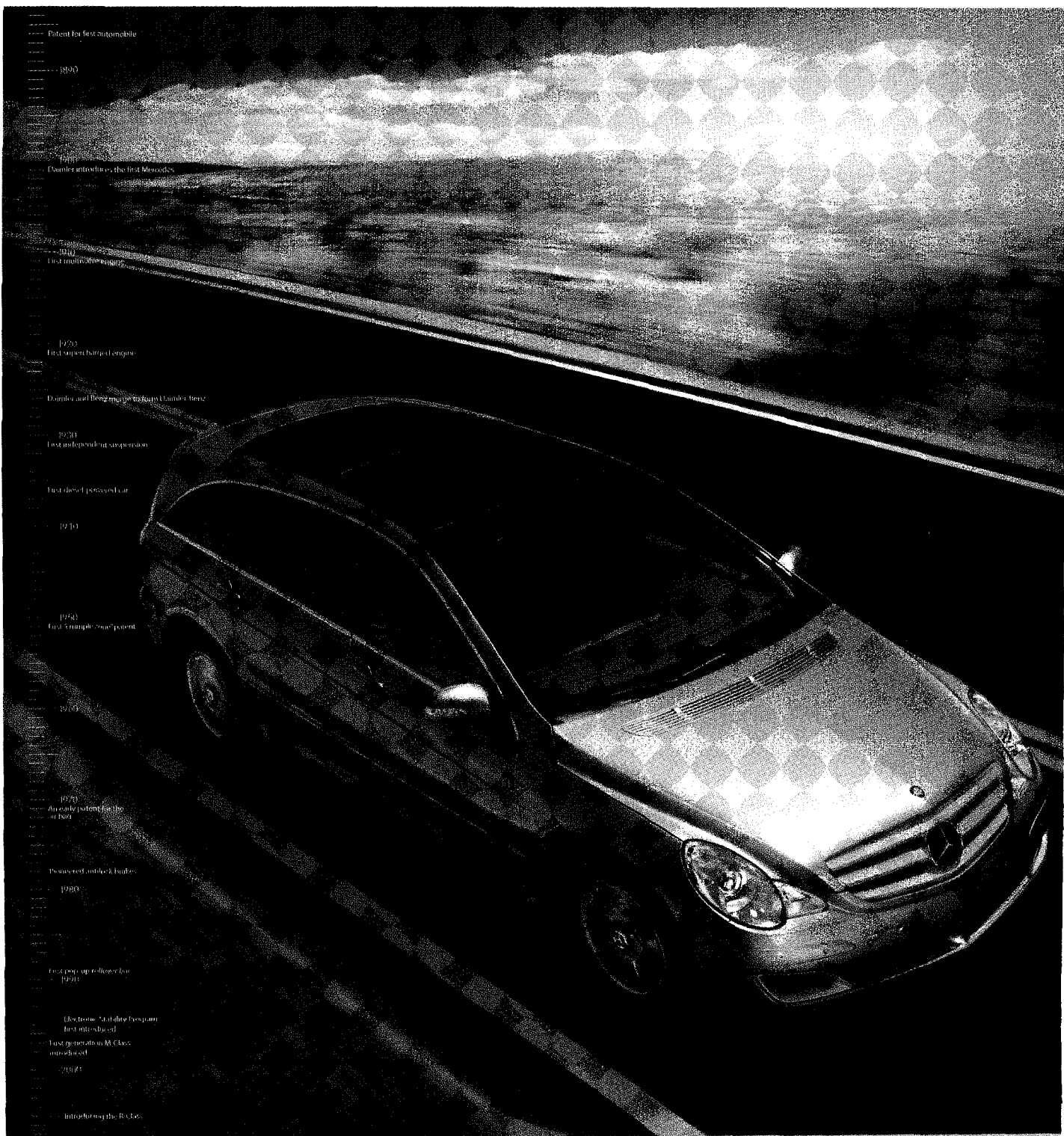
ravages of worship and travel. In churches and convention centers across the country thousands have reached over the blood-red velvet cordon and subtly corroded its surface with oily hands. Out on the road, bugs are the problem. The steamy southern climate pelts anything that barrels down the highway with mosquitoes, locusts, grasshoppers, flies, big fat bumblebees, and, worst of all, what truckers call "fuck bugs" (*Plecia nearctica* to entomologists), which swarm *in copula* for hours at a time, especially near the Gulf, and as a consequence—truckers and entomologists agree—make twice the splat of anything else you're likely to encounter. So the Rock is wiped down with an organic degreaser and often given a high-pressure chemical wash, too. Then it is dried, wrapped in plastic, placed atop a pallet, and driven northeast on Interstate 59 to the CrossPoints Community Church, in Gadsden, Alabama, to await the next visitation.

For two years now the Rock has been in exile, but this could soon change. Shortly after he took office as chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, in 2001, Roy Moore caused a national furor by commissioning and installing a granite monument of the Ten Commandments in the state supreme-court building and refusing to remove it. For a time in the summer of 2003 the Rock—or "Roy's Rock," as the monument also came to be known—put the issue of the government's relationship to religion on front pages and made Moore infamous. When Moore defied a federal court order to remove the monument, supporters from across the country descended on Montgomery, taking up residence on the steps of the supreme-court building and praying, singing, threatening, blowing ram's horns—all to protect God from the latest assault by the federal government.

The constitutional crisis that unfolded reached the U.S. Supreme Court before Moore and the Rock were ultimately tossed out. The national media moved on, but Moore and his legion of followers did not. The believers will tell you that God's will is not so easily thwarted.

Joshua Green is a senior editor of The Atlantic.





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That Moore has set something in motion that will not be stopped. That *whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess.*

Moore has since toured the country tirelessly, speaking about the Ten Commandments at churches and dinners, conferences and conventions, hitting thirty-one states last year alone to share the news that the federal government is threatening the American way of life. Over the course of several months I joined him for a series of interviews and speeches. Sometimes, in rural Alabama hamlets, the crowd numbered only a few dozen; other times, such as at the Southern Baptist Pastors Conference, it numbered in the tens of thousands.

And then there is the Rock. It, too, has toured the country since Moore was deposed, and it, too, has drawn crowds of thousands. Sometimes it arrives at a church or a convention to coincide with a Moore appearance; other times it is the main attraction.

As running mates go, the Rock is ideal. It is always on message. It is an indefatigable campaigner. It boasts a national following. And it is a terrific fundraiser.

You don't have to believe that Moore's Ten Commandments drama was prophetic, as some of his supporters do, or see the hand of God in the country's recent politics, to believe that the national culture is moving in Roy Moore's direction. Moore will tell you that before the filibuster showdown, before the Terri Schiavo controversy, before Tom DeLay insinuated violent retaliation against the federal judges who ended it, before the Supreme Court ruled that the Ten Commandments have no place in a courtroom, even before a swell of evangelical Christians carried George W. Bush to a second term, he was fighting the battle to acknowledge God. He has never stopped talking about it, never stopped arguing his case, and over the past three years he has built a national following, becoming a political phenomenon of the sort Alabamians haven't seen since the days of George Wallace.

For years Moore's has been a story that everybody in Alabama and almost nobody outside it knows. But the likelihood that he will challenge the state's incumbent governor, Bob Riley, a fellow Republican, is bringing him back to national attention. The race between Riley, the darling of the business community, and Moore, the religious conservative in excelsis, is shaping up as a showdown between the two pillars of the Republican Party, with implications that reach far beyond Alabama. In the local parlance Moore appears poised to "ride the Rock" to the governorship and re-establish himself in the spotlight. Only this time, if the Lord delivers him there, he will have an eye toward reshaping not just his courtroom but also his country in the image of God.

Anyone looking to foment a religious reawakening in America today would be wise to enlist the Southern Baptist Convention, particularly if the reawakening were to take the form of a political campaign. Southern Baptists, even more than other denominations, voted overwhelmingly for Bush and have emerged as a force within the Republican Party. Moore was hardly alone in seeking to intensify Christian influence over American public life when he appeared at the Southern Baptist Pastors' annual conference in Nashville, last June. But as the crusade's standard bearer in the political arena, he was given a prime speaker's slot, just before the Reverend Jerry Falwell.

Moore himself looks chiseled from granite. He has powerful, sloping shoulders, a barrel chest, and hands roped with muscle, evidence of his passion for stonemasonry and carpentry (he built his house and most of his furniture by hand). His coarse, thinning hair is swept high on his head, which he holds in a rectitudinous manner. Moore bears a resemblance to the actor Harvey Keitel, in his blunt, deeply etched features and in his air of brooding pugnacity.

After his usual introduction as "the Ten Commandments Judge," Moore, dressed in a dark suit and toting a wooden gavel that he occasionally pounded for emphasis, approached the lectern in the Nashville convention center and spread his hands. When he had dispensed the requisite thanks to his hosts, here is how he began his speech:

"It is indeed an honor to be here, and I sincerely mean that. But I would gladly have declined an honor to which I find myself unequal. I have not the calmness and impartiality which the infinite importance of this occasion demands. I will not deny the charge of mine enemies that resentment for the accumulated injuries of our country, and an ardour for her glory, rising to enthusiasm, may deprive me of that accuracy of judgment and expression which men of cooler passions may possess. Let me beseech you, then, to hear me with caution, to examine without prejudice, and to correct the mistakes into which I may be hurried by my zeal."

These words belong not to Moore but to Samuel Adams, who used them to address the members of Congress on August 1, 1776. But they neatly fit Moore's view that his Ten Commandments battle is a critical part of the larger American epic, and that he himself is an American revolutionary like Adams. In Moore's way of seeing things, the Founding Fathers intended the United States to be a Christian nation. He attributes the fact that many do not share this view to the malign influence of power-hungry federal judges and unprincipled lawmakers. Moore's installation of the Rock was an effort to force the issue, and its intended effect was as much legal as political. Put simply, Moore believes that the law vindicates him, and he has plundered texts from the Bible to Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* to build an elaborate case that God is the basis of American government. Where Moore parts company with others who share this historical view is in his assertion that the

government therefore falls under the sovereignty of God. His position goes beyond the notion of a civil religion and beyond even the views of most conservative judicial scholars. It amounts to theocracy. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers," he declared in Nashville, citing Romans 13:1. "For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Much of his standard speech is devoted to a complex textual analysis in support of this argument, complete with a PowerPoint slide show citing key quotations.

Moore has a remarkable gift: he has memorized dozens of multi-paragraph quotations that he is able to summon at will—most of them, like the Adams passage, from the Founding Fathers and their contemporaries. His speeches contain so many of these, and are delivered in a tone of such weighty solemnity, that if you were to listen to him with your eyes closed, you would half expect when you opened them to see him outfitted in breeches and a powdered wig.

The large crowd at the Southern Baptists' conference seemed to feed Moore's sense of ceremony, upping the historical-utterance quotient. As all his speeches tend to do, this one alternated between declaiming his legal-historical views and lamenting his ouster as chief justice—an event that has become the central focus of his life. In the middle of his speech Moore paused and turned to a JumboTron high overhead. The lights dimmed, and the audience was shown a videotape of Judge William Thompson reading the verdict that kicked Moore off the court in the ethics case stemming from his refusal to remove the Ten Commandments monument. When it ended, Moore told the audience, "I believe that video was given by God."

The reminder of this public slight seemed to ignite his passion. He went into an attack on his ideological opponents, his voice rising in anger. "Separation of church and state *does not mean* separation of God and government!" he said, and was stopped by applause. As Moore continued, his face became stern and then angry, and his voice was a roar. "'Be ye horribly afraid,'" he thundered, quoting from the second chapter of Jeremiah, "'for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' Our schools, our political institutions, are not holding water today, because we've tried to construct them without God! We've been deceived by a government that tells us we cannot worship God—contradictory to history, contradictory to law, and contradictory to logic. And we bow down. *Shall we bow down?*" Cries of "No!" cascaded from the rafters.

Then Moore downshifted, his voice growing solemn once more, and he demonstrated another rhetorical flourish common to the Founding Fathers: he shared his poetry.

"We're fighting wars all over this globe, it sometimes seems," he said. "We're fighting one in Iraq today." A beatific smile came over his face.

"And we face another war
Fought not upon some distant shore,
Nor against a foe that you can see,
But one as ruthless as can be.
It will take your life and your children too,
And say there's nothing you can do.
It will make you think that wrong is right,
Is but a sign to stand and fight.
And though we face the wrath of Hell,
Against those gates we shall prevail.
In homes in schools across our land,
It's time for Christians to take a stand,
And when our work on this earth is done,
And the battle is over and the victory is won,
When through all the earth His praise will ring,
And all the heavenly angels sing,
It will be enough just to see His son,
And hear him say 'My child, well done.
'You've kept my faith so strong and true,
'I knew that I could count on you.'"

As he finished, the crowd rose to its feet and broke into a chorus of "God Bless America."

When the Rock attends a convention, it is the first thing to arrive and the last thing to leave. The process of moving it is orchestrated by Chris Scoggins, the stocky, bespectacled, and deeply sunburned driver of the International flatbed, who, with his assistant Mike Hill, works for Clark Memorials Incorporated, which carved the monument and now sees to its safe passage.

Several days before Moore's speech the pair pulled up to the Nashville convention center in the crane truck. Everyone nearby stopped what he was doing and wandered over to peer at it. The respectful silence lasted until the arrival of a 6,000-pound forklift specially brought to move the monument (standard models can't hoist it). And then someone shouted to Steven McDonald, the lift's operator, "*Hey, Moses, put 'er over there!*"

Initially the plan had been to place the Rock onstage, alongside Moore. But this was overruled. The monument tends to draw the nervous attention of structural engineers wherever it travels. Those responsible for the convention feared that the stage couldn't withstand the weight. So rather than risk having the Rock crash through the floor mid-speech, "Moses" deposited it in the very center of the convention hall.

For five days the Rock stood cordoned off in velvet, as always, and looking slightly too elegant for the occasion. Booths for graffiti-proof church signs, modular fiberglass steeples, and Bible-navigation software combined to create the glitzy atmosphere of a trade show. But the Rock maintained its singular effect, quieting the thousands who filed past to gaze at it, the hush broken only by the occasional snap of a cell-phone camera.

Then, on the final evening of the conference, after the last blue-light special was announced (Ollie North's latest

novel, \$2.97), time was called, and out came the power drills, packing crates, wooden pallets, and swarms of lesser forklifts. Just before midnight, when most of the traveling circus had packed up and shipped off, the Rock was all that remained, still cordoned off and lit from above, alone in a storm of debris at the center of the 300,000-square-foot arena.

When Scoggins and Hill arrived to retrieve the monument the next morning, I intercepted them with what must have seemed an unusual proposition: let me join the Rock on tour, and I'll buy your meals and gas. They quickly agreed. The heavy-duty forklift rolled up with the Rock atop a pallet. As we strapped it to the truck with nylon and secured it with a winch, Scoggins gave me a quick course in being a roadie. Then he slid my suitcase behind a tombstone (they'd laid fifteen the day before), and we climbed aboard. The remaining workers stopped and stood at attention as we backed out. Before long we were open-throttle down the highway heading toward Birmingham.

I imagine that traveling through the South with the Rock is a little like riding in the Rolling Stones' tour bus. You're recognized, excitedly, almost everywhere you go—gas stations, restaurants, the 7-Eleven. "I don't know if I've run across anyone who didn't know what it is," Scoggins mused once when we stopped for lunch. "It's a household name around here." As if on cue, a white-haired man in boots and jeans, who'd been scrutinizing the International out front, ambled up to our table. "Y'all with Clark?" he asked appraisingly. We nodded. "Is that the Rock?" We assured him it was.

Scoggins told me that when he arrives back late from the road, he sometimes parks the truck in front of his home in Saginaw, which is across the street from the Amazing Grace Worship Center. Children stream in from the neighborhood to marvel at the Rock. The first time he brought it home was a Saturday night. When he awoke the next morning, church had just let out and the Amazing Grace congregation had surrounded his truck.

To an outsider the Rock's celebrity often feels surreal, until you come to understand how thoroughly it has permeated life in Alabama. My hotel gift shop in Montgomery sold Styrofoam Ten Commandments tablets. As we pulled into the tiny town of Hayden, the road was lined with political placards that read simply, "Judge Rochester. Like a Rock." It is shorthand for an entire culture.

Out on the highway one day something happened that Scoggins says is not uncommon. As we traveled down Interstate 59, a silver minivan carrying a large African-American family started to pass us on the left. Then someone recognized the Rock, strapped to the flatbed in plain sight. The van slowed down, and its occupants crowded the windows the way airplane passengers sometimes do when flying over an important landmark. When they finally sped off, the next car pulled alongside us to see what all the fuss was about, and the next one after that. When I looked back a little while later, the rolling retinue stretched out for a quarter mile behind us.

Earlier this year Moore published an autobiography, *So Help Me God*, that put a twist on the anodyne books standard in most high-profile campaigns. It isn't just the typical pol's tale of triumphing over adversity. Rather, Moore presents his life as resembling a series of biblical parables, wherein the controversy over the Ten Commandments is merely the culminating episode in a lifetime of arduous—but always morally clear—struggles during which he, through Calvinist perseverance and a belief in God, is always rewarded. A better way to understand Moore is to think of the Ten Commandments controversy as the bright line dividing his life: there is before and there is after, and they are two very different stories.

Roy Stewart Moore was born on February 11, 1947, in Cadsden, Alabama, the first of five children. His father, Roy Baxter Moore, was a construction worker who met and married Evelyn Stewart shortly after leaving the military following World War II. Moore remembers his father as a pious man and a strict disciplinarian, though one more likely to deliver hour-long lectures than punishment with a hickory switch.

Moore attended West Point on scholarship, the only way he could go to college, enrolling in 1965. He found the adjustment difficult. "I soon learned that one of the academy's tools for leadership training was intimidation," he writes in *So Help Me God*. He struggled socially and academically, graduating 640th in a class of 800. As a southerner he came in for frequent hazing, and he turned to boxing as an outlet for his frustration. Like his father, he became a rigid disciplinarian. "As a cadet he exacted a lot from everybody," says John Bentley, an Alabama judge who attended West Point with Moore. "I was a lowerclassman, and if you came by his room, you better have your shoes shined and your brass on right."

After graduation Moore was sent first to Germany and then to Vietnam, where he commanded a military-police company supervising a stockade in Da Nang. When he arrived, he says, drug use and insubordination were rampant, and he immediately began issuing "Article Fifteens"—disciplinary actions against his men. This earned him the nickname "Captain America." By his own account Moore was so much disliked that he feared being killed by his own troops, and slept on a bed of sandbags so that he couldn't be fragged by a grenade rolled under his bed. Moore did not believe it proper for an officer to consort with his men, but his code of manly conduct couldn't countenance the perceived disrespect. So he constructed a boxing ring in which, he writes, "I met all challenges from soldiers in the battalion." He was never attacked.

After the Army, Moore returned to Alabama to attend law school, and then accepted a job as deputy district attorney in Cadsden, the seat of Etowah County. He recalls this period as a happy time in his life, but some evidence suggests that it was less than idyllic. Court records and local newspapers show that Moore sued the county in 1981 demanding a pay

**Dear Ketel One Drinker
Someone once
described our product as
'class in a glass'.
And they say poetry is dead.**

raise (he got it); this was just one of a series of high-profile clashes with the local legal community. Moore believed that the sheriff's department was underfunded, so he took it upon himself to bring the issue before a grand jury—an audacious move for one in so modest a position. The infuriated presiding judge had Moore investigated by the state bar association for “suspect conduct.” The case was dismissed.

Moore was not dissuaded. Several weeks later he launched his first political campaign, running as a Democrat for circuit-court judge of Etowah County. He lost badly. After the election he was hit with a second complaint. This, too, was eventually dismissed. But Moore, now jobless and widely reviled, was essentially run out of town.

To cope, he returned to the ring, this time seeking a more demanding discipline. With \$300 in his pocket Moore moved to Galveston, Texas, and apprenticed himself to a man named Ishmael Robles, who was a world champion kick-boxer. He took a maintenance job and for nine months spent every spare moment learning full-contact karate. His vindication, as he views it, came the following year, when he returned to Alabama to compete in the Greater Gadsden Tournament of Champions. Moore fought a second-degree black belt and won. “It was a symbolic victory,” he writes in *So Help Me God*. “Truth prevailed.”

In style if not in substance, Moore's religious populism is a lineal descendant of the race-baiting that propelled George Wallace to the statehouse a generation ago. Moore has begun to wield a similar sort of influence.

Still restless and unwelcome in Gadsden, Moore was driven all the way to the Australian outback in his search for rugged challenge. One day, in the small town of Emerald, Queensland, he struck up a conversation with a local rancher, Colin Rolfe, who improbably shared Moore's passions for both Christianity and poetry. Short on money and with nowhere to go, he accepted an invitation to visit Rolfe's 42,000-acre ranch, and wound up living with the family and working as a cowboy for the better part of a year.

The unforgiving climate and the sense of timeless isolation seem to have satisfied something primal in Moore. “It was like going back in America 100 years,” he recalled in a magazine interview in 2002. “It was wonderful. Everything was built by hand; we drank rainwater that was gathered in a barrel on the roof. We killed cattle when we wanted meat. We stripped it right there on the field.”

Moore drifted back to Gadsden, believing himself ready at last to face down his old foes. In 1986 he ran for district

attorney in Etowah County, to head the office in which he'd served as a deputy for five years. Once again the establishment lined up against him, and he was handily beaten. With his fortieth birthday just months away, Moore was aimless, washed up politically, with no money and few prospects: he was a failure. There was no one left to fight.

In 1986 Guy Hunt became Alabama's first Republican governor in more than a century. Moore switched his party affiliation. Now married, he found enough legal work to get by. When Etowah County's presiding judge died, in 1992, a couple of Moore's associates lobbied Hunt to appoint him. The call came while he was attending a Veterans Day ceremony at his old high school. “The impossible had happened!” he wrote afterward. “God had given me something that I had not been able to obtain through my own efforts.”

Moore has provided various accounts of what came next. Sometimes he portrays his decision to hang a wood-burned plaque of the Ten Commandments behind his bench as an innocent gesture whose ramifications he never fathomed. When we spoke in May, however, Moore said he understood full well that his actions would generate controversy. But his rationale has always been fixed. “I wanted to establish the moral foundation of our law,” he told me.

Then everything changed.

Roy Moore's political rise can be traced to two male strippers (“Silk” and “Satin” were their professional names) brought before him on charges of murdering a drug addict. At the beginning of the trial the strippers' attorney objected to the display of the Ten Commandments. He later argued that the men had acted in self-defense and made a point of stating that his clients' choice of profession should not be held against them. The jury agreed, and acquitted them.

Soon others noticed the commandments, as well as Moore's habit of opening court sessions with a prayer—a practice begun many years earlier by George Wallace when he was a circuit-court judge and not uncommon in the years since. In June of 1993 the local branch of the American Civil Liberties Union sent a letter to the chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court threatening to sue anyone who opened court with a prayer. Moore smelled a fight.

Less than six months after he ascended to the bench, the ACLU asked if he would allow a court reporter to attend and record the prayer before his session. Moore agreed. The showdown came on June 20, 1994, when the ACLU's representative arrived, trailed by hordes of reporters. At the time, Moore was actively campaigning to be elected for a full term in the seat to which he had been appointed. After threatening to sue Moore over both the prayer and the plaque, the ACLU held off, possibly recognizing that doing so would only help him. It didn't matter. When the Ten Commandments controversy hit the newspapers, Moore took the ACLU's threat as an “act of intimidation” and refused to back down. Invitations to speak before civic

groups, churches, and schools began pouring in. On election day he faced off against the same prosecutor who had lost the Silk and Satin case. Moore won in a landslide.

It was a stunning metamorphosis. Here he was, the effortless possessor of the judgeship he could never win, risen to preside over the community that had written him off. "God is the author of such miracles," he declared in his book.

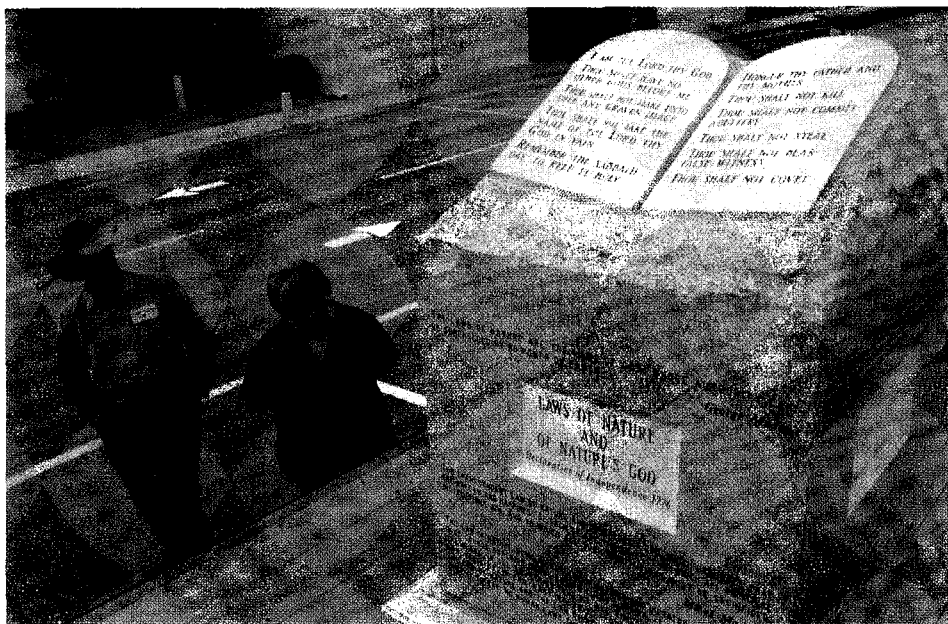
By now Moore was a state celebrity, the central figure in a controversy of sufficient public interest that politicians of both parties felt compelled to voice their grave concerns. Most lined up behind him. In March of 1995 the ACLU made good on its threat to sue, and Alabama's new Republican governor, Fob James, instructed the state to file suit in support of Moore. The case wound up before a state circuit-court judge, who declared it unconstitutional to open court with a prayer but initially allowed the commandments to remain. Moore staged a press conference, vowing, "I will not stop prayer," and declared a religious intent in displaying the commandments. Thus provoked, his opponents asked the judge to reconsider, and this time he ordered the plaque removed within ten days. Moore refused. Ten days later, after the Alabama Supreme Court stayed the order, he was in New York City appearing on *Today*. A poll showed that 88 percent of Alabamians supported him. In 1998 the court threw the case out on a technicality. Moore hadn't exactly won a legal victory, but there was no question who had triumphed in the court of public opinion.

Soon after that the spotlight shifted to the contest to replace the retiring chief justice of the state supreme court. Three experienced candidates had already declared when, in November of 1999, the Christian Family Association began an effort to draft Moore. It seemed like a long shot. The favorite to win the primary was a sitting supreme-court justice named Harold See, who was backed by the state's Republican establishment and the business community. And See had another advantage: his campaign was being run by Karl Rove.

Undaunted, Moore entered the race in December, making the announcement in his courtroom, with the Ten Commandments plaque prominently displayed behind him. Even after all the attention Moore was still viewed as a gadfly rather than a serious contender for the state's highest judicial office. Underfunded, and the target of a vicious Rove attack campaign, Moore stayed focused on the Ten Commandments and his contention that religious laxity "corresponded directly with school violence, homosexuality, and crime." His message was identical to the one in his previous race: "We must return God to our public life and restore the moral foundation of our law."

On the day of the primary Moore delivered one of the most surprising defeats of Rove's career, and later sailed to victory in the general election. This time the whole state witnessed it: Moore had defeated a black belt.

Just a month after the election Moore had an epiphany: God required something grander than a wooden plaque for the supreme-court building. So he dreamed up the Ten Commandments monument and chose his favorite historical quotations to adorn it. He found like-minded benefactors willing to underwrite the cost and a sculptor worthy of the task. On July 31, 2001, six months after Moore was sworn in as chief justice, Chris Scoggins and a team of movers rolled up to the supreme-court building, in Montgomery, under cover of darkness to prepare the Rock for its public



debut. They stood before a soaring neoclassical structure whose entrance was above dozens of limestone steps. A forklift was out of the question.

That was the first problem. Then there was the Rock's weight. The team had gone over the building's blueprints with engineers to find a spot with enough structural support, and had even traced the path they would follow going in. But you could never be certain. The court building sits above a parking garage. The engineers worried that the floor might collapse, and then who knew what would stop the Rock?

There had already been setbacks. Moore had ordered the monument months before. But on its way down from Vermont the block of granite cracked! (He returned it.) It was critical that the movers install the monument without damaging it or the building. People were beginning to wonder if the chief justice had backed down to the ACLU after all.

If you want to move a large block of granite to a place a crane won't go, the technological options haven't changed much since the pyramids were built. That first time, in the dead of night, it took twenty men to get the Rock in position,

heaving it up the steps on plywood boards and then forward, inch by inch, on wooden rollers until the rear rollers came free and could be carried around to the front and reinserted. Then the whole thing rolled a little farther. There were so many people pushing that not everyone could get his hands on it, so some of the men bent low and leaned a shoulder into those in front of them, driving forward like a rugby scrum.

The Chief (as he now preferred to be called) had given a lot of thought to where he would place the Rock. The trouble with putting it in the courtroom was that hardly anyone would see it. The supreme court seldom heard oral arguments in its glorious building. Instead the justices traveled to locations all over the state to hold court, as a way of spreading civic involvement. It might take years to draw a lawsuit! So Scoggins and his crew were instructed to place the Rock directly beneath the rotunda in the center of the lobby. That way no one could miss it. It would be the first thing anyone saw when entering the building.

When they finished, it was 4:30 A.M. The Rock was in position, draped with a red veil. In a few hours all hell would break loose.

Moore offers an authenticity no other conservative can claim. He is viewed as a martyr to the secular establishment and an exotic specimen in the fallen world of politics—someone who sacrificed power for principle.

Later that morning Moore summoned the media. With representatives from across the state at rapt attention, one of his deputies led a prayer, and then, as Moore stood to deliver his remarks, the veil was torn off to reveal the monument.

The media focused on the Rock, naturally. But Moore's purpose that day was much larger than the Ten Commandments. This was a historic moment. Before the Founding Fathers signed the Declaration of Independence, Samuel Adams stood before Congress on August 1, 1776, and delivered his famous speech. Exactly 225 years later *to the day*, Moore delivered a declaration of his own.

"Today a cry has gone out across our land for the acknowledgment of that God upon whom this nation and our laws were founded," he said, "and for those simple truths which our forefathers found to be self-evident; but once again"—here he slipped into Samuel Adams's words—"we find that those cries have fallen upon eyes that see not, ears that hear not our prayers, and hearts much like that nether millstone ... May this day mark the restoration of the moral foundation of law to our people and the return to the knowledge of God in our land."

For nearly a century after Reconstruction political power in Alabama was concentrated among a coterie of interests known as the Big Mules. They included the state's largest landowners—typically timber barons—along with industries such as steel, coal, iron, and utilities, all of them united by opposition to anything that might threaten their influence, including allowing blacks to vote.

Despite their collective clout, no individual interest ever dominated the state. In his seminal book *Southern Politics* the political scientist V. O. Key Jr., noting Alabamians' "wholesome contempt for authority," posited that the "picturesque quality of many southern political leaders lies in the fact that attention-attracting antics function as a substitute for party machinery." Races tend to be roiling free-for-alls that often reward the most charismatic candidate, and have produced the legends of Alabama politics—such mythic populists as "Big Jim" Folsom and George Wallace. Successful politicians, Key observed, were "self-appointed and self-anointed" and "attract to themselves [followers] by favor, chance, or demagogic skill." Key was writing in 1949, so give him points for foresight. A better explanation of Moore's rise to power is hard to come by.

Over time, while Alabama's contempt for authority has remained proudly intact, much else has changed. The steel and iron industries have declined, and other interests have arisen to replace them. Blacks, trial lawyers, religious conservatives, and the teachers' union now rank as powerful factions to be dealt with. But winning high office still requires harnessing the Big Mules or overcoming them.

By capitalizing on these power shifts and emulating his populist forebears, Moore has managed to do both. Of the current forces none looms larger than religious conservatives. Over the past decade polls have consistently shown that as many as 70 percent of Alabamians favor the creation of a state lottery. Yet each time a proposal has appeared on the ballot, it has failed—a running testament to religious conservatives' political muscle. Moore has painstakingly cultivated this group since his circuit-court days, and it is the source of his most fervent supporters.

Despite his frequent recourse to history, Moore is not given to quoting George Wallace. But his political ascent is uncannily similar. Before he became governor, Wallace used his circuit-court bench as a platform for railing against federally imposed racial integration, much as Moore used his to agitate against federal forces that would remove the Ten Commandments. What catapulted each man to power was an ability to tap into voters' prolonged sense of being besieged by vividly evoking a common enemy. In each case the enemy was the federal courts.

Shortly after he installed the Ten Commandments monument, Moore was sued by three public-interest groups, and in due course a federal judge declared the installation unconstitutional. When his appeal was denied, Moore

faced a federal court order to remove the monument. He surprised no one when, on August 14, 2003, he declared, "I have no intention of removing the monument of the Ten Commandments and the moral foundation of our law." With that a showdown was imminent.

Thousands of supporters descended on the supreme-court building to "protect" the Rock, shutting down historic Dexter Avenue with campers and RVs and sleeping on the courthouse steps. After the U.S. Supreme Court rejected an emergency appeal, twenty-two people were arrested while kneeling in the rotunda, where the Rock still stood. Gorman Houston Jr., a justice on the court, wrote a brief memoir of the controversy that captures its flavor. One morning Houston went to open his office window, on the third floor of the judicial building, and was startled to encounter a protester, who had shinnied up and perched on the ledge. Another, more polite protester approached the building manager to request permission to blow a ram's horn from the top of the judicial building's dome. (It was denied.) He settled for blowing it among the throngs below.

When Moore deeded the monument to the State of Alabama he included a clause returning ownership to him in the event it was removed. On August 27 the remaining eight justices moved it from the rotunda to a storage room. (Moore didn't retrieve the Rock until the following summer.) The protesters didn't budge. Not until September 3, when the police barricaded the courthouse, did the protesters finally disperse. When they were gone, the limestone steps had to be pressure-washed to remove the smell of urine.

A *Newsweek* reporter once described federal judges as George Wallace's "cherished dragons." During the Ten Commandments controversy a total of thirty-four judges ruled against Moore; not a single one ruled for him. Yet he emerged as one of the most popular figures in the state.

In style if not in substance, Moore's religious populism is a lineal descendant of the race-baiting that propelled Wallace to the statehouse a generation ago. Moore has begun to wield a similar sort of influence. Last year he began targeting the eight justices who removed the monument, saying they had abandoned God. Of the three facing re-election, two opted to retire, and the third was defeated by one of Moore's lawyers. Next year three more are up for re-election, and can expect Moore-supported challengers if they run.

Moore is not just eyeing the governor's office but putting together an entire slate of candidates to run under his auspices in the Republican primary. Another of his lawyers is running for lieutenant governor, and the search is under way for an attorney-general candidate. Moore has in effect established a splinter sect of religious conservatives bent on taking over the Republican Party, and his reach extends to every corner of the state.

Like Wallace and Folsom in their populist heyday, Moore has his strongest support in rural areas. In June he spoke

at a Baptist church in the small town of Andalusia, where I was to meet him. Pulling off Interstate 65 at Owassa and heading southeast, I watched the landscape thin to Georgia scrub pines and little else. A roadside billboard announced that this was Moore country. It read, GO TO CHURCH OR THE DEVIL WILL GET YOU!

In every Moore crowd an undercurrent of messianic zeal is detectable, and here a few zealots buttonholed passersby, animated by communist infiltrations and dark tidings of the Bavarian Illuminati. But like the activists who thronged to the Rock, these were merely Moore's most visible partisans, and misleading as to his broader base of support. Most of the 300 or so people gathered in Andalusia were practically Rockwellian in appearance—tanned, scrubbed, and glowing with health, a sea of golf shirts and pastel tops, nearly every adult surrounded by clambering children. Most were conflicted about Moore. I heard countless variations on the statement that while they did not necessarily agree with some of his methods, he had, after all, stood up for God—and in the end, who else could you support?

To people like these Moore offers an authenticity that no other conservative, not even George W. Bush or Tom DeLay, can claim. He is viewed as a martyr to the secular establishment and an exotic specimen in the fallen world of politics—someone who sacrificed power for principle.

Whether Moore truly sacrificed power by defying a federal court order is a matter of debate. In any event, it was a formal sacrifice with immense practical gains. What is certain is the continuing strength of his political appeal. One circuit-court judge in Andalusia has gone so far as to embroider the Ten Commandments onto his judicial robe. (Mortifyingly, he has not yet been sued.)

Moore's stature has grown to the point where he defies the rules that normally govern politics. One consultant who has worked against him describes Moore's effect in an election as like that of a black hole whose pull alters the dynamics of races up and down the ticket. Because of the passions generated over the Ten Commandments, Moore attracts people who ordinarily wouldn't vote and others, such as blacks, who ordinarily wouldn't vote Republican (though he also drives away some moderate Republicans). His race for chief justice in 2000 drew more voters than had participated in Alabama's gubernatorial election two years earlier. One recent poll shows him running eight points ahead of the incumbent governor, Riley.

The centerpiece of Moore's campaign remains his cherished dragons. Though he lost the legal battle over the Ten Commandments, the political effect of his doomed showdown with the federal courts mirrored Wallace's after his defiant stand against federal agents at the Birmingham schoolhouse door. What Wallace and Moore seemed to sense in the southern mindset is that as long as one refuses to be intimidated, a heroic loss can elevate one's political standing—even to the level of icon.

As running mates go, the Rock is ideal. It is always on message. It is an indefatigable campaigner. It boasts a national following. And it is a terrific fundraiser. Since Moore left office it has been the force behind his political life.

Typically, an image of the Rock is beamed onto a giant screen before Moore takes the stage. Most of his speeches, and even his idle conversations, obsessively return to it. He has even copyrighted the monument. Today the Rock plays a role weirdly analogous to that of a retired Kentucky Derby winner gone to stud: with Moore's blessing, it is being cloned for a Baptist group in Atlanta.

At the height of the controversy Moore's friends established the *Foundation for Moral Law*. Just after he was ousted, they installed him as chairman. The nonprofit has grown rich through donations and by selling books, DVDs, tie pins, T-shirts, even a Ten Commandments wall clock ("Hear God's eternal rules of life every hour while soft piano music plays in the background"). The income generated has funded his bodyguard's salary, much of his travel, and a prominent building in downtown Montgomery that is slated to become the foundation's new headquarters.

As the public battle continues over the Ten Commandments, Moore's stature seems likely to grow. If he declares for the governor's race this fall, his national following should instantly position him as a right-wing analogue to Howard Dean—the personification of a movement to which its members are implacably committed. One political consultant I spoke to, who is not affiliated with Moore, predicted that Moore would easily raise more money from out of state than any other gubernatorial candidate in U.S. history.

With access to so much capital and with an ambitious speaking schedule, Moore already seems to be campaigning for something larger than governor. George Wallace parlayed his popularity into a series of presidential runs. With a wide-open Republican field in 2008 and an explosion of political activism among religious conservatives, Moore might attempt something similar. There was, in fact, great trepidation in the Bush-Cheney re-election campaign that Moore would enter the 2004 presidential election and siphon off enough voters to throw the race to John Kerry. Karl Rove, a Moore casualty once already in his career, allowed the campaign to intervene in Alabama to make sure that Moore's replacement as chief justice wasn't announced until after the filing deadline for third-party presidential candidates, for fear of offending Moore and provoking him to enter the race.

Should Moore become governor, he would have a more prominent platform than ever before. If he carries with him a wave of judges and an attorney general, he will have both the capacity and a popular mandate to challenge fundamental issues about the limits of religion in government. This is a prospect that profoundly unsettles not just liberals but conservatives aware of how Moore's influence could change public perceptions of the Republican Party. In light of Moore's crusading nature it seems clear that in the approaching vac-

uum of the post-Bush era he will attempt to exercise a measure of control over the national Republican Party, much as he has done in the Alabama Republican Party.

When we spoke, Moore seemed to relish the thought, though he was careful to couch his ambition as a godly duty. "Do I like the fight in politics—do I like the controversy?" he asked. "No, not really. But if I think that that's what God put me here for, and that people want me to do this, then I'm going to have to do this."

Later that evening Moore was the keynote speaker at the annual conference of the Pacific Justice Institute, a conservative judicial group in California that is active in Christian circles. It was here, among his fellow seekers of a return to a constitutional utopia, that Moore gave the clearest glimpse of how he views himself and his crusade.

Before a room of 500 people Moore launched into the usual description of how he'd been railroaded by the federal courts. But then he stopped and announced that he'd brought something special. He turned to the giant video screen behind him and told the audience that he was going to show them his cross-examination by Bill Pryor, then the state attorney general, in the Ten Commandments case.

Cameras had been barred from the proceedings, Moore explained in a voice of deepest solemnity, but someone had sneaked in and recorded them anyway. Judging from the angle of the shot, the cameraman had hidden high above the courtroom floor. Moore had somehow managed to get hold of a bootleg tape and had extracted the scene of his cross-examination. He had superimposed the grainy video of his testimony on an American flag, fluttering in slow motion, and scored the scene with soaring orchestral music:

PRYOR: And your understanding is that the federal court ordered that you could not acknowledge God; isn't that right?

MOORE: Yes.

PRYOR: And if you resume your duties as chief justice after this proceeding, you will continue to acknowledge God as you have testified that you would today?

MOORE: That's right.

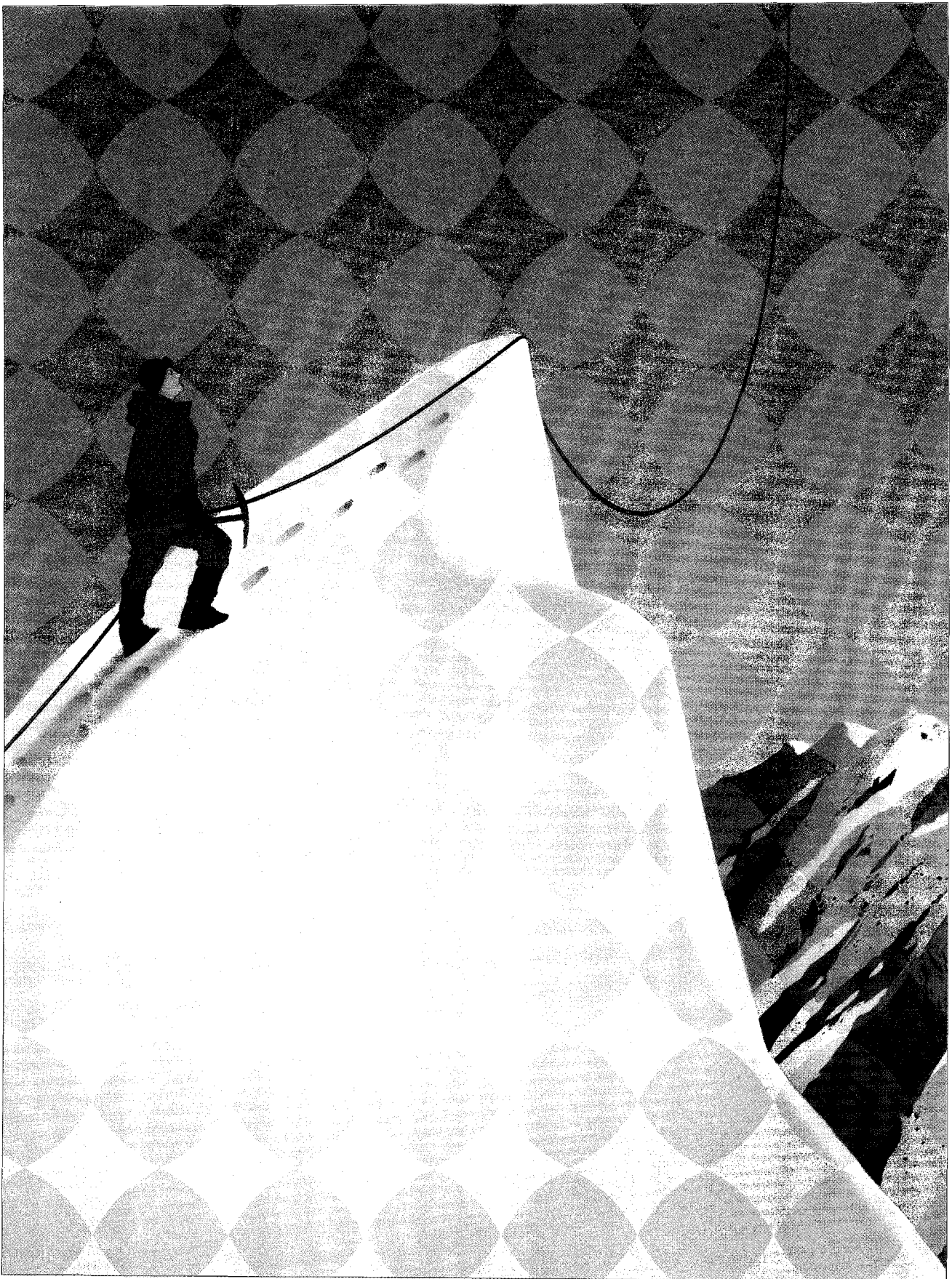
PRYOR: No matter what any other official says?

MOORE: Absolutely. Without—let me clarify that. Without an acknowledgment of God, I cannot do my duties. I must acknowledge God. It says so in the constitution of Alabama. It says so in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. It says so in everything I have read.

PRYOR: The only point I am trying to clarify, Mr. Chief Justice, is not why, but only that in fact, if you do resume your duties as chief justice, you will continue to do that without regard to what any other official says. Isn't that right?

MOORE: ... I think you must.

When the lights came up, Moore was standing at attention with his hand over his heart, tears shining in his eyes. The audience roared. ▀



STEP *by Guy Billout*

IMPERIAL GRUNTS

With the Army Special Forces in the Philippines and Afghanistan—laboratories of counterinsurgency

BY ROBERT D. KAPLAN

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America is waging a counterinsurgency campaign not just in Iraq but against Islamic terror groups throughout the world. Counterinsurgency falls into two categories: unconventional war (UW in Special Operations lingo) and direct action (DA). Unconventional war, though it sounds sinister, actually represents the soft, humanitarian side of counterinsurgency: how to win without firing a shot. For example, it may include relief activities that generate good will among indigenous populations, which in turn produces actionable intelligence. Direct action represents more-traditional military operations. In 2003 I spent a summer in the southern Philippines and an autumn in eastern and southern Afghanistan, observing how the U.S. military was conducting these two types of counterinsurgency.

THE PHILIPPINES

The inability of a democratic and Christian Filipino government to rule large areas of its own Muslim south—with al-Qaeda-related activity the result—became a principal concern of the United States in the wake of September 11, 2001. Operation Enduring Freedom, which focused primarily on removing the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, also had an important Philippine component. In the aftermath of 9/11 U.S. troops entered the Muslim south of the Philippines for the first time since World War II.

In Afghanistan, Enduring Freedom combined conventional military elements with Special Operations forces and a militarized CIA. In the Philippines the effort was almost exclusively a Special Forces affair. The base of operations was Zamboanga, the center of the Spanish colonial administration in Mindanao and of the American effort against the Moros a century ago.

By the time I arrived in the Philippines, a number of leaders of the radical Islamic group Abu Sayyaf had been killed, and the group had

scattered to smaller islands. Yet the American Joint Special Operations Task Force, or JSOTF (pronounced *Jay-so-tef*), was still in place when I got to Zamboanga, and various Special Forces A teams were still training Filipino units nearby and on the main island of Luzon.

One morning soon after my arrival I found myself on a broken chair in a vast iron shed by the ferry dock in Zamboanga, in rotting heat and humidity. The water was a tableau of fishing nets and *banca* boats with bamboo outrigging. The floor in front of me was crowded with garbage and sleeping street people. Next to me were two new traveling companions from the JSOTF: Special Forces Master Sergeant Doug Kealoha, of the Big Island of Hawaii, and Air Force Master Sergeant Carlos Duenas Jr., of San Diego. They would accompany me to the island of Basilan—"Injun Country" in the view of the JSOTF, though Abu Sayyaf guerrillas had largely been routed.

I felt the familiar excitement of early-morning sea travel. From here in Zamboanga you could hop cheap and broken-down ferries all the way south along the Sulu chain to Malaysia and Indonesia. Had I been by myself, I might have been tempted to do it. I would certainly have had no qualms about going to Basilan alone. But being embedded with the U.S. military, as I was, meant giving up some freedom in return for access. I rode to the dock in a darkened van with three soldiers in full kit, along with Kealoha and Duenas, who, although they were in civilian clothes, carried Berettas under their loose shirts. Troops of the 103rd Brigade of the Filipino army would meet us at the dock in Isabela, the capital of Basilan.

PACOM (the U.S. Pacific Command) had in 2002 decided to focus on Basilan because it was the northernmost and most populous island in the Sulu chain—the link between the southern islands and the larger island of Mindanao. Were Abu Sayyaf and other Muslim guerrilla groups to be ejected from Basilan, they would be instantly

Robert D. Kaplan is a correspondent for The Atlantic. This article, part of an Atlantic series, will appear in somewhat different form in Imperial Grunts: The American Military on the Ground, to be published this month by Random House.

*U.S. Special Forces,
Afghanistan*

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marginalized, it was thought. Basilan, with a population of 360,000, was important enough to matter, yet small enough to allow the United States a decisive victory in a short amount of time.

The first thing Special Forces had done about Basilan was conduct a series of population surveys. SF surveys were a bit like those conducted by university academics; indeed, many an SF officer had an advanced degree. But there was a difference. Because the motive behind these surveys was operational rather than intellectual, there was a practical, cut-to-the-chase quality about them that is uncommon in academia. Months were not needed to reach conclusions. Nobody was afraid to generalize in the bluntest terms; thus conclusions did not become entangled in exquisite subtleties. Intellectuals reward complexity and refinement; the military rewards simplicity and bottom-line assessments. For Army Special Forces—also called Green Berets—there was only one important question: What did they need to know about the people of Basilan in order to kill or drive out the guerrillas?

The Basilan operation was a case of American troops' applying lessons and techniques learned from their experience of occupation in the Philippines a hundred years before.

Special Forces officers teamed up with their counterparts in the Filipino army to question the local chiefs and their constituents in the island's forty *barangays*, or parishes. They conducted demographic studies with the help of satellite imagery. They found that the Christian population was heaviest in the northern part of Basilan, particularly in Isabela. Abu Sayyaf's strongest support was in the south and east of the island, where government services were, not surprisingly, the weakest. The islanders' biggest concerns were clean water, basic security, medical care, education, and good roads—in that order. Democracy or self-rule was not especially critical to the Muslim population. It had already had elections, many of them, which had achieved little for the average person: the government was elected but did not rule the group. Abu Sayyaf activities had shut down the schools and hospitals, and the guerrillas had kidnapped and executed teachers and nurses. The surveys demonstrated that the most basic human right is not freedom in the Western sense but physical security.

Next, under the auspices of Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines, the Joint Task Force dispatched twelve Green Beret A teams to Basilan, backed up by three administrative B teams. Their mission was to train the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) units, which would then conduct opera-

tions against Abu Sayyaf. Doing that meant digging wells for American troops and building roads so that they could move around the countryside. The Americans also built piers and an airstrip for their operations. The Green Berets knew that all this infrastructure would be left behind for the benefit of the civilian population: that was very much to the point.

It was precisely in the Abu Sayyaf strongholds where the Green Beret detachments chose to be located. That in itself encouraged the guerrillas to scatter and leave the island. And by guaranteeing security, the U.S. military was able to lure international relief agencies to Basilan, and also some of the teachers and medical personnel who had previously fled. The American firm Kellogg, Brown & Root built and repaired schools and water systems. SF medics conducted medical and dental civic-action projects (MEDCAPs and DENTCAPs, in military parlance) at which villagers volunteered information about the guerrillas while their children were being treated for scabies, malaria, and meningitis.

The objective was always to further legitimize the AFP among the islanders. The Americans went nowhere and did nothing without Filipino troops present to take the credit. When ribbons were cut to open new roads or schools, the Americans made sure to stay in the background.

With discretionary funds the Americans also built several small neighborhood mosques. "We hired locally and bought locally," a Green Beret officer told me, referring to the labor and materials for each project. The policy was deliberately carried to the extreme. Repairing roads meant clearing boulders off them; when the Green Berets saw peasants chipping away at these boulders to make smaller rocks, they bought the "aggregate" from the peasants and used it to lay the new roads.

The ostensible mission was to help Filipino troops kill or capture international terrorists. That was accomplished by orchestrating a humanitarian assistance campaign, which severed the link between the terrorists and the rest of the Muslim population: exactly what successful middle-level U.S. commanders had done in the Philippines a hundred years before. "We changed the way we were perceived," a Green Beret told me. "When we arrived in Basilan, Muslim kids made throat-slashing gestures at us. By the time we left, they were our friends. That led them to question everything the guerrillas had told them about Americans."

When I arrived in Basilan, the Americans had been gone for almost a year. Were their accomplishments long-lasting?

Before Enduring Freedom the hospital in Isabela had had twenty-five beds, and the staff had largely deserted to Zamboanga. Now there were 110 beds plus a women's clinic. The facility was being kept clean and orderly, with good water and electricity. The grounds

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were in the midst of landscaping. "Tell the American people that it is a miracle what took place here in 2002," Nilo Barandino, the hospital's director, told me. "And what was given to us by the American people, we will do our best to maintain and build upon. But there is still a shortage of penicillin. We get little help from Manila." Barandino said that Basilan used to be a "paradise for kidnappers," but since the American intervention kidnapping had stopped and the inhabitants of Isabela had begun going out at night again. A decade earlier he himself had been kidnapped.

From Isabela I headed southwest with Kealoha and Dueñas, in a Humvee. Everywhere we saw portable bridges and sections of new road. If one island paradise on earth surpassed all others, I thought, it was here, with rubber-tree plantations and pristine palm jungles adorned with breadfruit, mahogany, mango, and banana trees under a glittering sun.

In Maluso, a predominantly Muslim area on Basilan's southwestern tip, facing the Sulu Sea, I met a water engineer, Salie Francisco. He jumped into the Humvee with us and took us deep into the jungle to follow the trail of a pipeline constructed by Kellogg, Brown & Root. It led to a dam, a water-filtration plant, and a school, all recently built by the United States Agency for International Development. The area used to be an Abu Sayyaf lair. The terrorists were gone. But, as Francisco told me, there were no jobs, no communications facilities, and no tourism, despite expectations raised by the Americans.

I saw poor and remote villages of the kind that I had seen all over the world, liberated from fear, and with a new class of Westernized activists beginning to trickle in. "The Filipino military is less and less doing its job here," Francisco told me. "We are afraid that Abu Sayyaf will return. No one trusts the government to finish building the roads that the Americans started." He went on: "The Americans were sincere. They did nothing wrong. We will always be grateful to their soldiers. But why did they leave? Please tell me. We are very disappointed that they did so."

As I continued around the island over the next few days, especially in the Muslim region of Tipo-Tipo, to the southeast, local Muslim officials were openly grateful toward the U.S. military for the wells, schools, and clinics that had been built, but critical of their own government in Manila for corruption and for not providing funds for development. True or not, this was the perception.

In southern Basilan the material intensity of Islamic culture became overpowering for the first time on my journey south, with a profusion of headscarves, prayer beads, signs for *halal* food, and a grand new mosque in Tipo-Tipo, paid for, it was said, by Arabian Gulf countries. I had entered an Islamic continuum, in which the Indonesian islands of Java, Borneo, and Sumatra seemed closer than Luzon.

Though I would learn more about Operation Enduring Freedom, one thing was already obvious: America could

not change the vast forces of history and culture that had placed a poor Muslim region at the southern edge of a badly governed, Christian-run archipelago nation. All America could do was insert its armed forces here and there, as unobtrusively as possible, to alleviate perceived threats to its own security when they became particularly acute. And because such insertions were often in fragile Third World democracies, with colonial pasts and prickly senses of national pride, U.S. forces had to operate under very restrictive rules of engagement.

Humanitarian assistance may not be the weapon of choice for Pentagon hardliners, who prefer to hunt down and kill "bad guys" through direct action rather than dig wells and build schools—projects that in any case are possibly unsustainable, because national governments like that of the Philippines lack the resolve to pick up where the United States leaves off. I had the distinct sense that the work of Special Forces on Basilan had merely raised expectations—ones the government in Manila would be unable to meet. But nineteenth-century-style colonialism

If America and Pakistan are ever to pacify the radicalized tribal agencies of the Afghan-Pakistani borderlands, it will be through a variation on how Special Forces operated in Basilan; direct action alone will not be enough.

is simply impractical, and the very spread of democracy for which America struggles means that it can no longer operate without license. An approach that informally combines humanitarianism with intelligence gathering in order to achieve low-cost partial victories is what imperialism in the early twenty-first century demands.

The Basilan operation was a case of American troops' applying lessons and techniques learned from their experience of occupation in the Philippines a hundred years before. Although the invasion and conquest of the Philippine Islands from 1898 to 1913 became infamous to posterity for its human-rights violations, those violations were but one aspect of a larger military situation that featured individual garrison commanders pacifying remote rural areas with civil-affairs projects that separated the local population from the insurgents. It is that second legacy of which the U.S. military rightly remains proud, and from which it draws lessons in this new imperial age of small wars.

The most crucial tactical lesson of the Philippines war is that the smaller the unit, and the farther forward it is deployed among the indigenous population, the more it can accomplish. This is a lesson that turns imperial overstretch



*U.S. Special Forces,
the Philippines*

on its head. Though one big deployment like that in Iraq can overstretch our military, deployments in many dozens of countries involving relatively small numbers of highly trained people will not.

But the Basilan intervention is more pertinent as a model for future operations elsewhere than for what it finally achieved. For example, if the United States and Pakistan are ever to pacify the radicalized tribal agencies of the Afghan-Pakistani borderlands, it will have to be through a variation on how Special Forces operated in Basilan; direct action alone will not be enough.

Moreover, as free societies gain ground around the world, the U.S. military is going to be increasingly restricted in terms of how it operates. An age of democracy means an age of frustratingly narrow rules of engagement. That is because fledgling democratic governments, besieged by young and aggressive local media, will find it politically difficult—if not impossible—to allow American troops on their soil to engage in direct action.

Iraq and Afghanistan are rare examples where restrictive rules of engagement do not apply. But in most other cases U.S. troops will be deployed to bolster democratic governments

rather than to topple authoritarian ones. Therefore unconventional warfare in the Philippines provides a better guidepost for our military than direct action in Iraq and Afghanistan.

AFGHANISTAN

By the time I left the Philippines, the postwar consolidations of Iraq and Afghanistan were in jeopardy. Both the Pentagon and the American public had thought in terms of a decisive victory. Yet the fact that more U.S. soldiers had been killed by shadowy Iraqi gunmen after the dismantling of Saddam Hussein's regime than during the war itself indicated that the real war over Iraq's future was being fought now, and Operation Iraqi Freedom of 2003 had merely shaped the battle space for it.

In Afghanistan, too, a rapid and seemingly decisive military victory had been followed by a dirty and bloody peace. Small-scale eruptions of combat, with few enemy troops visible, were now a permanent feature of the landscape. They were something the United States would have to get used to, whichever party occupied the White House.

Warlordism, always strong in Afghanistan, had been bolstered in recent decades by the diffuse nature of the

REUTERS

mujahideen rebellion against the Soviets, the destruction wrought by fighting among the *mujahideen* following the Soviet departure, and the bureaucratic incompetence of the Taliban itself, which was more an ideological movement than a governing apparatus. An Afghan state barely existed even before the U.S. invasion of October 2001. Thus, barring some catastrophe such as the fall of a major town to a reconstituted Taliban, or the assassination of President Hamid Karzai, discerning success or failure would be a subtler enterprise in Afghanistan than in Iraq. The continued turmoil in the greater Middle East, and my desire to observe Army Special Forces in a more varied role than what I saw in the Philippines, led me on a two-month journey to Afghanistan in the fall of 2003.

The American invasion of Afghanistan a month after 9/11 was greeted with a chorus of dire, historically based predictions from the media and academia. American soldiers, it was said, would fail to defeat the rugged, unruly Afghans, just as the Soviets and the nineteenth-century British had. The Afghans had never been defeated by outsiders; nor would they ever be. After only a few weeks of American bombing, however, the Taliban fled the Afghan capital of Kabul in disarray. To say that the Americans succeeded because of their incomparable technology would be a narrow version of the truth. America's initial success rested on deftly combining high technology with low-tech field tactics. It took fewer than 200 men on the ground from the Army's 5th Special Forces Group, in addition to CIA troops and Air Force Special Ops embeds, helped by the Afghan Northern Alliance and friendly Pashtoons, to topple the Taliban regime.

If history could have stopped at that point, it would be an American success story. But history does not stop. By the fall of 2003 the Taliban had regrouped to fight a guerrilla struggle against the U.S.-led international coalition—similar to the struggle that the *mujahideen* had waged against the Soviets. With hit-and-run attacks across a dispersed and mountainous battlefield, and a new national army that needed to be trained and equipped, Afghanistan constituted a challenge better suited to Special Operations forces than to the conventional military.

With troops jammed elbow-to-elbow along the sides, divided by a high wall of Tuff bins, mailbags, and rucksacks, the C-47 Chinook, followed by its Apache escort, lifted off the pierced steel planking that the Soviets had left behind at Bagram Air Force Base. The rear hatch was left open where an M-60 7.62mm mounted gun was manned by a soldier strapped to the edge. Beyond the gun the landscape of Afghanistan fell away before me: mud-walled castles and green terraced fields of rice, alfalfa, and cannabis on an otherwise gnarled and naked sandpaper vastness, marked by steep canyons and volcanic slag heaps. The rusty, dried-blood hue of some of the

hills indicated iron-ore deposits, the drab greens copper. Because of the noise of the engine, everyone wore earplugs. Nobody talked. Soon, like everyone else, I fell asleep.

An hour later the Chinook descended steeply amid twisted, cindery peaks. Hitting the ground, those of us who were headed for the firebase grabbed our rucksacks and ran off through the wind and dust generated by the rotors. At the same time, another group of soldiers, waiting on the ground, ran inside. The crew threw off the mailbags and Tuff bins. Then two soldiers on the ground led a hooded figure, his hands tied in flex cuffs and a number scrawled on his back, to the helicopter. In less than five minutes the Chinook roared back up into the sky.

The handcuffed man was a PUC: "person under control"—what the U.S. military calls its temporary detainees in the war on terrorism. It has become a verb; to take someone into custody is to "PUC him." The men who had put the PUC in the Chinook—en route to Bagram, where he would be interrogated—were members of an Army Special Forces A team based at an Afghan firebase in Gardez. But they didn't look like any of the Green Berets I had so far encountered in my travels. These Green Berets had thick beards and wore traditional Afghan kerchiefs, called *deshmals*, around their necks and over their mouths, Lone Ranger-style, as protection against the dust. On their heads were either flat woolen Afghan *pakols* or ball caps. Except for their camouflage pants, M-4s, and Berettas, there was nothing to identify them with the U.S. military. They brought to mind the 2001 photos of Special Forces troops on horseback in Afghanistan that had mesmerized the American public and horrified the old guard at the Pentagon. All were covered with dust, like sugar-coated cookies.

I threw my rucksack in the back of one of their Toyota pickups and we drove to the firebase, a few minutes away. There was a science-fiction quality to the landscape, which seemed devoid of all life forms. Near the fort were two distinctive hills that the driver referred to as "the two tits."

Firebase Gardez is a traditional yellow, mud-walled fort; the flags of the United States, the State of Texas, and the Florida Gators football team were flying from its ramparts. Surrounded by barren hills on a tableland 7,600 feet above sea level, the fort looks like a cross between the Alamo and a French Foreign Legion outpost.

An armed Afghan militiaman opened the creaky gate. Inside, caked and matted with "moondust," as everyone called it, stood double rows of armored Humvees, armed GMVs (ground mobility vehicles), and Toyota Land Cruisers—the essential elements of a new kind of convoy warfare, in which Special Ops was adapting tactics more from the Mad Max style of the Eritrean and Chadian guerrillas of recent decades than from the lumbering tank armies of the passing Industrial Age.

Hidden behind the vehicles and veils of swirling dust were canvas tents, a latrine, a crude shower facility, and

the perennial Special Forces standby—a weight room. Almost everyone here was either a muscular Latino or a white guy dressed like an Afghan-cum-convict-cum-soldier. Half of them smoked. They put Tabasco sauce on everything. Back at home most owned firearms. They bore an uncanny resemblance to the freelance journalists who had covered the *mujahideen* war against the Soviets two decades earlier.

“Welcome to the Hotel Gardez,” said a smiling and bearded major, Kevin Holiday, of Tampa, Florida. Major Holiday was the commander of this firebase and of another in Zurmat, two hours south by dirt road. “Within these walls we have ODB-2070 and two A teams, 2091 and 2093,” he told me in rapid-fire fashion. “Next door, living with an ANA [Afghan National Army] unit, is 2076. Down at Zurmat is 2074. Most of us are 20th Group guardsmen from Florida and Texas, here for nine months, except for a tent full of active-duty 7th Group guys on a ninety-day deployment”—the Latinos. “We’re the damn Spartans.” Holiday smiled again. “Physical warriors with college degrees.”

From Firebase Gardez, Major Holiday’s “Spartans” launched sweeps across Paktia Province, trying to snatch radical infiltrators from Pakistan. “All the bad guys are coming from Waziristan,” Holiday said, referring to a Pakistani tribal agency. “Because of the threat from Pakistan, there is not much civil-affairs stuff going on here.” Officially, the Pakistani government of President Pervez Musharraf was an ally of the United States. But like his predecessors, and like the British before them, Musharraf had insufficient control over the unruly tribal areas. “Pakistan is the real enemy” was something I quickly got used to hearing.

“Who was the PUC put on the Chinook when I arrived?” I asked Holiday.

“We hit a compound. It had zero-time grenades, seven RPGs, Saudi passports, and books on *jihad*. The PUC lived there. We’ve got more people to round up from that hit.”

“Everything we do,” he went on, repeating a phrase I had heard often already, “is ‘by,’ ‘through,’ ‘with’ the indigs. The ANA comes along on our hits. Though the AMF [the tribally based Afghan Militia Forces] are the real standup guys. They see themselves as our personal security element. Yeah, every time we go out on a mission, we try to pick up hitchhikers—any Afghan who wants to be associated with what we do. Give the ANA and AMF the credit, put them forward in the eyes of the locals. We have to build up the ANA—it’s the only way a real Afghan state will come about. But it’s naive to think you can simply disband the militias.”

The mud-walled fort was, in Major Holiday’s words, a “battle lab” for Special Forces. One of the goals was to implement the El Salvador model: build up a national army while at the same time employing more-lethal paramilitaries, and then make the latter gradually and quietly disappear into the former. The process would take years—a prospect Holiday relished. I was reminded of what another

Special Forces officer, Lieutenant Colonel David Maxwell, had told me: counterinsurgency always requires the three *Ps*—“presence, patience, and persistence.”

Holiday, who had just turned forty, seemed the most clean-cut of the fort’s inhabitants. A civil engineer with a master’s degree from the University of South Florida, and the father of three small children, he was chatty, well-spoken, and intense. “God has put me here,” he told me matter-of-factly. “I’m a Christian”—he meant an evangelical. “The best kind of moral leader is one who is invisible. I believe character is more important than education. I have noticed that people who are highly educated and sophisticated do not like to take risks. But God can help someone who is highly educated to take big risks.”

“You see all this around you?” Major Holiday asked, eyeing the dust, engine grease, and mud-brick walls. “Well, it’s the high point of my military life and of everyone else here.”

Holiday had served in the 82nd Airborne before returning to civilian life and then joining Special Forces as a Florida National Guardsman. His long months of Guard duty did not please his private employer, so he left his job and went to work as a civil engineer for the state. “You see all this around you?” he asked, eyeing the dust, engine grease, and mud-brick walls. “Well, it’s the high point of my military life and of everyone else here.”

“What about the beards?” I asked.

Holiday smiled, deliberately rubbing his chin. “The other day I had a meeting at the provincial governor’s office. All these notables came in and rubbed their beards against mine, a sign of endearment and respect. I simply could not get my message across in these meetings unless I made some accommodations with the local culture and values. Afghanistan is not like other countries. It’s a throwback. You’ve got to compromise and go native a little.”

“Another thing,” he went on. “Ever since 5th Group was here, in ’01, Afghans have learned not to tangle with the bearded Americans. Afghanistan needs more SF, less conventional troops, but it’s not that easy, because SF is already overstretched in its deployments.”

Holiday disappeared into the Operations Center, or OPS CEN, where I was not permitted because I lacked the security clearance. He had a tough, lonely job, I learned, being the middleman between the firebase and the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force—CJSOTF. The higher-ups wanted no beards, no alcohol, no porn, no pets, and very safe, well-thought-out missions. The guys here wanted to go a bit wild and crazy, breaking rules as 5th Group had

done in the early days of the war on terrorism, before “Big Army” entered the picture, with its love of regulations and hatred of dynamic risk. A monastic existence of sorts had evolved here, with its own code of conduct.

Holiday had to sell the missions and plead understanding for the beards and ball caps with the CJSOTF, which, in turn, was under pressure from the Combined Joint Task Force-180 at Bagram. On one occasion, when the guys were watching a particularly raunchy Italian porn movie during chow, Holiday came in and turned it off, saying, “That’s enough of that; keep that stuff hidden, please.” An angry silence ensued, but the major got his way. Holiday, though an evangelical Christian, is no prude. He was only being sensible. If we are going to flout the rules, he seemed to be saying, we have to at least be low-key about it.

“The area where I’m from we call the Redneck Riviera,” Lieutenant Colonel Marcus Custer, of Mobile, Alabama, told me as we returned to Gardez one evening. “Now, I know what you’re thinking.” He laughed. “Yeah, I’ve got relatives who live in trailers, who’ve never been thirty miles from their home. I eat grits.” In fact Custer is an ethnic Cuban who had been separated from his family because of Fidel Castro, and was adopted by southerners. “So I’m not really related to *the* General Custer.”

After he had arrived on a short visit, Custer and I moved into my tent, where we had many late-night conversations. He was a 19th Group National Guardsman, and a Customs officer in civilian life. Like the other Guardsmen, he had a lack of ambition that made him doubly honest. One night, while cleaning an old Lee Enfield rifle on a Bukharan carpet, Custer gave me his theory on the problem with the war on terrorism as it was being waged in Afghanistan. I later checked his theory with numerous other sources on the front lines, and it panned out perfectly: This wasn’t his theory so much as everyone’s, when people were being honest with one another. Sadly, it was a typical American scenario. I will put into my own words what he and many others explained to me.

The essence of military “transformation”—the Washington buzzword of recent years—is not new tactics or even weapons systems but bureaucratic reorganization. In fact, such reorganization was achieved in the weeks following 9/11 by the 5th Special Forces Group, based in Fort Campbell, Kentucky, whose handful of A teams (with help from the CIA, Air Force Special Ops embeds, and others) conquered Afghanistan.

The relationship between 5th Group and the highest levels of Pentagon officialdom had, in those precious, historic weeks of the fall of 2001, evinced the organizational structure that distinguished al-Qaeda and also the most innovative global corporations. It was an arrangement with which the finest business schools and management consultants would have been impressed. The captains and team sergeants

of the various 5th Group A teams did not communicate with the top brass through an extended, vertical chain of command. They weren’t even given specific instructions. They were just told to link up with the indigs—the Northern Alliance and also friendly Pashtoos—and help them defeat the Taliban. And to figure out the details as they went along.

The result was the empowerment of master sergeants to call in B-52 strikes. Fifth Group was no longer a small part of an enormous defense bureaucracy. It became a veritable corporate spinoff, commissioned to do a specific job its very own way, in the manner of a top consultant. But as time went on, that operating procedure came to an end. Now what had previously been approved orally within minutes took three days of paperwork, with bureaucratic layers of lieutenant colonels and senior officers delaying operations and diluting them of risk. When hits finally took place, they more than likely turned up dry holes. One of the basic laws of counterinsurgency warfare, established in the Marines’ *Small Wars Manual* (1940) and the British Colonel C. E. Callwell’s *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (1896), was being ignored: Get out of the compound and out among the local people, preferably in small numbers. Yet the CJTF-180 in Bagram, by demanding forms and orders for almost every excursion outside the firebase, acted as a restraint on its Special Forces troops, whose whole purpose was to fight unconventionally in “small wars” style.

There was no scandal here, no one specifically to blame. It was just the way Big Army—that is, big government, that is, Washington—always did things. It was standard Washington “pile on.” Every part of the military wanted a piece of Afghanistan, and that led to bureaucratic overkill.

It was clear that the counter-intelligence guy was missing a lot. He didn’t speak Pashto beyond a few phrases. Here was where the American Empire, such as it existed, was weakest.

“Big Army just doesn’t get it,” Custer said, like a persevering parent dealing with the antics of a child. “It doesn’t get the beards, the ball caps, the windows rolled down so that we can shake hands with the hajis and hand out PowerBars to the kids. Big Army has regulations against all of that. Big Army doesn’t understand that before you can subvert a people you’ve got to love them, and love their culture.” (In fact, one reason that some high-ranking officers in the regular Army hated the beards was that they brought back bad memories of the indiscipline of the Vietnam-era Army.)

“Army people are systems people,” he went on. “They think the system is going to protect them. Green Berets

don't trust the system. We know the Kevlar helmets may not stop a 7.62mm round. So we wear ball caps—they're more comfortable. When you see a gunner atop an up-armor, bouncing up and down in the dust, breaking his vertebrae almost, let him wear a ball cap and he's happy. His morale is high because simply by wearing that ball cap he's convinced himself that he's fucking the system.

"Maybe in the future we'll be incorporated into a new and reformed CIA, rather than into Big Army. Any bureaucracy that is interested in results more than in regulations will be an improvement. You see, I can say these things—I'm a Guardsman."

During my time at Firebase Gardez, I went out regularly on "presence patrols" throughout the countryside. On one occasion the convoy descended from the mountains through cannabis fields and newly tilled poppy plantations. A massive mud-walled fort with Turkic-style towers loomed in the distance, marijuana leaves drying on its ramparts. I thought of the poppy fields on the way to the Emerald City in *The Wizard of Oz*.

We halted in the middle of the road at the sight of what looked like a landmine. It wasn't. But by a turn of events the halt led to a local Afghan intelligence officer's inviting a counterintelligence guy, two other Green Berets, and me into his house for tea, while the rest of the convoy stood guard outside. He served the tea in a carpeted room heated by a dung-fired stove, with aspen beams overhead. I stared at the dust drifting into the tea.

Our host eventually discussed a certain Maulvi Jalani, who had entered into an informal alliance with Jalalludin Haqqani, the former *mujahideen* leader in Paktia and Khost, and a man associated with Saudi Wahhabi extremists like Osama bin Laden. He explained how opium profits were funding the Islamic opposition to Karzai. He believed that the Taliban would not return to power. More likely was the coalescing of an Iranian-brokered coalition of anti-American and anti-Karzai forces, to include Haqqani, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and other of the more radical ex-*mujahideen* leaders, along with disaffected elements of the Northern Alliance, some remnants of the Taliban, and al-Qaeda.

The intelligence officer wanted us to stay for a meal, but we politely declined, since we had hours of traveling ahead. As usual, the map was useless. The dendritic pattern of dirt roads dissolved into incomprehensibility. The idea that a command post far away at Bagram could determine, as it had tried to, what roads we turned down, in a land where roads were virtually nonexistent, suddenly struck me as ludicrous. Twenty-first-century communications technology worked toward the centralization of command, and thus toward micro-management. But the war on terrorism would be won only by adapting the garrison tactics of the nineteenth century, in which lower-level officers in the field forged policy as they saw fit.

A few days later approval came for a hit near Gardez. Rather than wait, an eleven-vehicle convoy was immediately stood up, and around 9:00 P.M. we were off. By now I had been on enough compound hits to know the drill, so after we arrived I drifted away in the dark from my assigned vehicle and, after a while, proceeded inside the compound by myself, to see how the search was progressing.

Green Berets were probing with flashlights for two unexploded grenades that one of the occupants had just thrown at them. "Watch where you walk," I was warned. Along the courtyard were darkened rooms, illuminated by blue chemlights that the Green Berets had left behind to indicate that the rooms had already been cleared. Inside the house I peeked into a room where two Green Berets were kneeling on a carpet. They were using a flashlight to go over a pile of documents they had found, being careful not to wake two children who, miraculously, were sleeping through this mayhem.

As I left the compound, I noticed a counterintelligence officer interrogating one of the male inhabitants. They were both squatting against a section of mud wall, illuminated by flashlights attached to the M-4s held by other Green Berets, who had formed a semi-circle. The Afghan had a long white beard and a brown hood over his *pakol*. He looked stoic, unafraid. The counterintelligence officer was asking him simple stock questions in English: Had he seen anything suspicious? Who were his friends?

Each question elicited a long conversation between the man and the interpreter. It was clear that the counterintelligence guy was missing a lot. He didn't speak Pashto beyond a few phrases. Here was where the American Empire, such as it existed, was weakest.

Finally, all the counterintelligence officer could say to the man was "If you ever have a problem, come and see me at the firebase." Yes, this is what the man would surely do: forsake his kinsmen, and trust this most recent band of invaders passing through his land, invaders who could not even speak his tongue.

It wasn't the counterintelligence officer's fault that he hadn't been given the proper language training. Several years into the war on terrorism, one would think that Pashto would be commonly spoken, at least on a basic level, by American troops in these borderlands. It isn't. Nor are Farsi and Urdu—the languages of Iran and the tribal agencies of Pakistan, where U.S. Special Operations forces are likely to be active, in one way or another, over the coming decade. Like Big Army's aversion to beards, the lack of linguistic preparedness demonstrates that the Pentagon bureaucracy pays too little attention to the most basic tool of counterinsurgency: adaptation to the cultural terrain. It is such adaptation—more than new weapons systems or an ideological commitment to Western democracy—that will deliver us from quagmires. ▀

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF TOCQUEVILLE (PART IV)

*From the storm systems
in Florida to those of
Washington, D.C.*

BY BERNARD-HENRI LÉVY

Translated by Charlotte Mandell

ON FEELINGS ABOUT NATURE IN AMERICA

For a European, one of the most enigmatic characteristics of the American ethos is its relationship with nature.

There's the wildness of nature here, first of all. The closeness of this wild nature that we tend to think has been domesticated by technology—when in fact it's just been pushed back a little, moved farther away. Here, for instance, in the Everglades, in this national park scarcely thirty miles from Miami, it's been contained within an immense reservation right at the edge of populated areas. In Europe, I believe, they would have exterminated the wildlife that continues here to paddle around in the swamp's deep waters. I am convinced that these boa constrictors, these lizards, these cottonmouths with their deadly poison, these powerful blue herons that feed on baby alligators—and the alligators themselves, presented to us as the “guardians of the Everglades” and carefully observed by the old nature buffs in the county—would doubtless have been victims of the great prophylactic cleanup demanded by European civilization, whose dream ever since Descartes has been to turn us into masters and possessors of nature. Not here. Here there is no real mastery. No possession. The Floridians don't tame nature; they push it back. Instead of subjugating it, they drive it away. Florida is so vast, and space is of such lesser importance than it is in Europe, that there's room for both city and nature. And the same goes for California, where,

my friend Charlie Lyons tells me, some nights he hears coyotes howling in the hills behind his house.

There is the violence of nature. There is the extreme brutality, also unimaginable in Europe, not just of certain animals but of the elements, especially hurricanes and tornadoes. I heard them talked about at every stage of my journey, and I ended up realizing that they are more numerous and, in a sense, more devastating in the United States than anywhere else among so-called developed countries. “Florida under attack!” a disheveled, livid journalist shouted on CNN the other day, live from some coastal town buffeted by a storm in this paradise for retirees. Attack by what? I wondered. Who was attacking? Which Osama bin Laden or Saddam Hussein emulator? But it was just Jeanne. It was the nascent Hurricane Jeanne, coming from the Bahamas, fast approaching the southeastern American coast. It would be easy in this case to wax ironic. One could detect in this journalist's anxiety an additional manifestation of the American taste for grand spectacles and exaggeration. But you might snigger a little less if you tried to imagine behind Jeanne—and also, in recent months, behind the familiar names Alex, Frances, Ivan, Charley, Karl, and Lisa; or, last year, Kate, Larry, Isabel, Erika, Ana, and Claudette—the torrential floods, the walls of furious water beating down on the beaches, the houses with their roofs blown off, the rain of frogs and lizards, the trees uprooted; in short, the landscapes of desolation that we have no actual concept of in France and that three weeks

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ago in Punta Gorda, for instance, resulted in sixteen dead ... People in the United States don't need to imagine; they know. (And this knowledge feeds their extreme sensitivity to this kind of cataclysm when it takes the form of a tsunami and devastates a destitute country.)

Finally, the most striking aspect for a European when faced with this implacable recurrence of natural catastrophes, some of which (Hurricane Andrew; the Mississippi flood of 1927) have gone down in history and have shaped the construction of the American landscape—the most incomprehensible thing—is the relatively passive roles of politicians and citizens. Oh, I'm well aware of how television carries on about the weather. I know that Florida has the most effective meteorological-forecasting stations in the world. And in New Orleans I saw the ingenuity deployed to avoid a repetition of the 1927 scenario. But let me tell you about Homestead. I'll take the example of this town on the road to the Everglades, in a landscape of fake trees painted yellow, orange, blue, and red as if to liven things up, this town devastated a dozen years ago by Hurricane Andrew, and also hit by many of the ensuing hurricanes. What takes you by surprise in Homestead is the vulnerability of the houses. What bewilders and stuns you is that everything has been rebuilt just as it was before, with the same prefab kits and the same kinds of trailers, which look as if they've been set down ready-made, patched together, a little rickety. You wonder what will keep them from flying apart in the same way when the next Andrew, Mitch, or Allison comes along. America has the means to protect Homestead. The America that hasn't ceased to dream of the Star Wars missile-defense shield has the most effective warning and prevention systems in the world. But, strangely enough, it doesn't use even a tenth of its capacity to keep the inhabitants of Homestead out of danger by strengthening building and insurance codes. Just as I've never seen a European airport as profoundly paralyzed as the major American airports can be by a snowstorm, for instance, so I can't imagine the principle of precaution so poorly applied in my country as it is here in Homestead. Why is it so neglected?

There's the culture of risk, stronger than the culture of security and the inclination to self-protection.

There are the remains of a pioneering spirit that for decades, or rather for centuries, has accommodated itself to a sense of temporary habitat, perched as it were on the side of the road, pressing forward with the frontier, and by definition precarious.

But there is also, anchored deep in the mentality of the country, a magical, semi-superstitious relationship to what Americans, even the secular ones, are prone to call Mother Nature. As if their omnipotence found its limits there, reached its rational confines there. As if the Promethean will to get the better of all things and all people imposed on itself a limit of principle and wisdom in this relationship to the elements. No pity for our enemies, the American of the twenty-first century seems to be saying; no mercy for terrorists, certainly,

or even for opponents of the country's economic supremacy. But we'll let nature take her best shot.

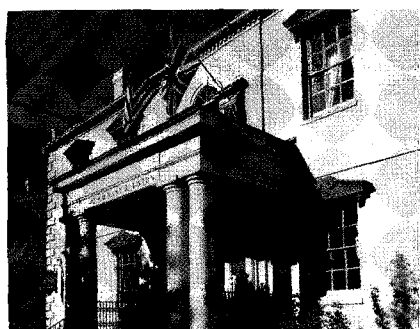
MY OWN PHANTOM IN SAVANNAH

All right—I've changed my mind. If I had to take up residence in one city in this country—if I had to choose one town, and only one, to live in—it might not be Seattle after all but Savannah. Savannah's charm. Its striking, Old South beauty. The pastel houses—water-gray, pale mauve, sea-blue, sepia. The mixture of Italianate and Greek Revival architecture, Victorian and Doric, Second Empire and Regency, witnesses to bygone eras when rich shipowners from London, settling in Savannah, vied with one another for style and splendor. The foam-colored stucco imitating cut stone. The rare marble, the columns that lend the town an air of triumphant grace. The wide avenues lined with moss-covered trees—giant magnolias, sycamores, myrtles—where, more than in Atlanta, you really expect to see the ghosts of *Gone With the Wind* appearing any instant. The squares—there are twenty-one of them—with huge oak trees, around which the town was built. The deliberate, thought-out quality of the city. (Didn't its founder, James Edward Oglethorpe, mean to create a model city, a utopia, cleansed of the sins of crime, alcohol, prostitution, and—even more unusual for the South—slavery?) At the same time, there is the absence of that hysterical, leveling modernism that swallows up the past and all shades of difference, which almost always goes along with programmed urban growth in America. Here is a city as methodically marked out in grids, as perfectly geometrical, as the city-camps of the West, but which has managed to preserve its past, cultivate it, enhance it, with the same conscientious care of Venice, Amsterdam, or any other European museum-city. This cemetery over here, for instance—this old cemetery with just a few graves scattered among the wild grasses, all, or almost all, dating back to the Civil War or earlier. This necropolis in the middle of the town is not a museum, and anyone can wander through it, without aim or itinerary, without ticket or guided tour. These lopsided obelisks and crypts, these slabs and tombs of cracked or crumbling stone, these monuments, these uneven flagstones, which anywhere else would be either destroyed or museified, like the Cardiff Giant and the dinosaur teeth of South Dakota, but which here, in Savannah, just form part of the landscape, as objects of a discreet but passionate piety. And it's here I come to realize the importance that the memory of their wars possesses for the men and women of the American South—not so much the world wars but the other wars. Wars that we Europeans barely think about, but that southerners, in one way or another, in shame or glory, bitterness or exaltation, never seem to tire of commemorating. The Indian wars, obviously. The Civil War, which here they call the War of Secession, and which, I begin to realize, remains an open wound in the

side of this refined Savannah, infused with aristocratic values, where, one is convinced, this very aristocracy, this art of living and this taste for art in life, even more so than slavery itself, inspired Northern resentment. And then the War of Independence. Here, in this cemetery, in the intricate shadows of 200-year-old trees, are half-effaced plaques from this first American war, on which one can still, with great difficulty, make out the names of young men from England, France, or Poland, caught in obscure affairs of duels, honor offended or avenged, heroic deeds, who now have only these humble inscriptions in these great books of stone to recall them to the memory of the living ...

In short, I love Savannah. I love the way the inhabitants love their town. I love the gesture, for instance, of those officers who in 1864 wanted to surrender to General Sherman rather than see Yankee troops sack the city. And I love the story of those citizens who a century later mounted

moral bewilderment, noxious spells, gardens of good and evil. Isn't that right, John Berendt? For all these reasons my mind is made up. For these reasons and a few others it's Savannah I choose. Especially since ... one last element in my story. I am at John Duncan's place, on East Taylor Street, facing Monterey Square and the famous Mercer House, which is the center, if ever there was one, of the actual event that gave rise to Berendt's fiction. On the mezzanine I visit Duncan's "antique maps and prints" store. Then I visit the several floors of his private apartments, whose wood paneling, costly mirrors, rare books scattered about on polished inlaid tables, offer a concentrated dose of Savannah's elegance. And impishly Duncan tells me that Savannah has, in a way, already chosen me. Do you know who the first known owner of this house was? he asks, and then corrects himself. Do you know to whom we owe its most drastic renovations? Well, it was a Frenchman



In Savannah I come to realize the importance that the memory of their wars possesses for the men and women of the American South; wars that we Europeans barely think about, but that southerners, in shame or glory, bitterness or exaltation, never seem to tire of commemorating.

guard in front of the Davenport House to prevent it from being demolished, and thus founded the Historic Savannah Foundation, which watches over the memory and integrity of the city to this day. I have seen so many unloved cities in America since this journey started. In my mind's eye there are so many cities half destroyed, or simply disfigured, by vandalism and the indifference of their inhabitants. Buffalo ... Detroit ... Cleveland ... Lackawanna ... The cities die off, the great shattered cities of the American North and also the northern-style cities in the South. Savannah is the anti-model, then. Savannah—a rare but all the more precious case of metrophilia, or city-love, in America. The love in Savannah of this portion of intelligence and beauty that dies when cities die. The way time passes slowly in Savannah. The extraordinarily special, almost enclosed, space of Savannah. This feeling you have of walking around in a greenhouse, almost a bubble, a minuscule and fragile island protected from barbarian invasions. And also the enchantment of Savannah. And this other feeling that overwhelms you soon enough: that this unostentatious town is subtly poisonous, decadent. And then Savannah by night, even more enigmatic than it seems, less pure, bathed in a twofold light and exhaling the two habitually opposite flavors of flaunted austerity and secret liberty, of the most extreme puritanism and most concealed licentiousness:

... An Alsatian, in fact ... He had a store not far from here, on Bryan Street, and then another one on Jefferson, and then, at the end, on East Broughton ... And guess what this Alsatian's name was—this Frenchman whose ghost haunts this house. B.-H. Lévy! He had a brother, his partner, whose name was Henry Lévy. But his name was B.-H. Lévy, Benjamin-Hirsch Lévy—BHL.

ELEGY FOR F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

Imagine F. Scott Fitzgerald in Asheville.

Imagine Zelda, first of all. Imagine her in the asylum, Highland Hospital, the location of which I finally found, after much searching. Highland? you ask. Zelda? Asheville has its excuses, given that the asylum burned, and Zelda with it, the night of March 10 to 11, 1948, and nothing remains of it. But I would have no excuse if I hadn't set out this morning in search of some trifle, some ruin, some ashes, maybe a museum, at least a plaque. America makes museums of everything; why shouldn't it have erected a Zelda museum in Asheville? So I looked. And I eventually discovered the spot, after wandering for a long time along Elizabeth, Magnolia, and Cumberland. But no plaque. Not a word. Not the least shadow of a memory, either in passersby or in the neighbors. And for the oblivion to be complete and the obliteration total, another clinic, Fine Psychological Associates, built—but

without anyone's acknowledgment—on the site of Zelda's burned-down deathtrap: the perfect crime.

So I have to imagine Zelda here, on the top floor, on a foggy morning like today—yellow foliage beyond her barred window, cries of insanity, convulsions. I imagine her paintings, her exasperated drawings, her severe self-portrait, the sketch of the young Scott in which he appears like an old Baudelaire, the letters reproaching him for plagiarizing her, sterilizing her, killing her slowly, having her locked up—that was convenient, wasn't it! Disposing of a real madwoman to inspire the madwomen in his novels! Never does her memory become clouded; never does she loosen her grasp; it's 1936, but she hasn't turned in her weapons ... And you have to imagine him, Scott—a good boy, really, a good husband, unless she's right and he really can write only when he's near her—raiding her inner depths, drawing from her diaries and her letters. You have to imagine him settling down here, in contact with his despoiled muse, a few miles away, on Macon Avenue, in this frightful Grove Park Inn, half hotel, half hunting lodge, which still exists. If the memory of Zelda has been lost, the memory of Scott has been reinforced. Scott? Of course, a guy at Reception says to me. Everything's here. Nothing's been changed: the paneling in the lounges, the immense terrace looking out onto the void. And then, at the entrance to 441–443, the brass plaque indicating that this was a “place of solace” for the ruined Scott “during frequent visits in 1935 and 1936.” And the obscene insistence with which I am asked to believe that the author of *The Great Gatsby* came here just to look after his mad wife. He had come here by himself in 1935, one year before Zelda, to cure his lung disease. Asheville is a pretty town; Asheville is a radiant town; he came from Baltimore to Asheville because Asheville is a town that does writers good—that was his idea.

What is he really doing at the Grove Park Inn?

Since Dr. Slocum has told him it isn't healthy either for him or for her if he sees Zelda too often, what does he do to fill those long days in the summer of '36, and in the winter, and in the following summer?

He sees the young Pauline Brownell, whom the biographers barely mention, but who is looking after his shoulder, dislocated in an absurd diving accident in July.

He is playing Pygmalion to Dorothy Richardson, his other nurse, whose presence the hotel required after his most recent suicide threat, and whose main mission is to prevent him from drinking.

He is flirting with Laura Guthrie, his typist, to whom he dictates whatever he writes. Soon he will be producing the first drafts of scripts that his new slave drivers in Hollywood have ordered and which he hopes will give him one more shot at glory.

He spends long afternoons locked up in one of his two rooms with Beatrice Dance, a rich Texan. According to Asheville rumors, he seduced her.

He reads psychiatric manuals.

He goes to his friend Tony Buttita's place, the best bookstore in town, and buys all kinds of psychiatric books from him. Schizophrenia? Manic depression? Is it iron she needs? Salt? Is it merely a fluke that her remissions have always coincided with her asthma attacks? For a long time now he's been trying to understand ...

And then he goes to see her.

Whatever the doctors say, he can't prevent himself from traveling the few hundred feet. I am Francis Scott Fitzgerald, the ex-famous writer; I'm coming to visit my wife.

I imagine him then, as in the Carl Van Vechten photo, his knitted tie a little short, wide-labeled jacket a little long, handkerchief in pocket like an aging dandy, cheerless gaze, hair still carefully slicked back, but the part is on the side. The charm has gone flat.

I imagine him with Zelda. Endless arguments. Bitter memory of happier times: Antibes; Murphy; charades in towels; grant me this waltz; the day when, to please her, he ate an orchid; the night in Saint Paul de Vence when Isadora Duncan gave him the address of her hotel on the sly, and so to punish him Zelda threw herself down the steps of the Colombe d'Or restaurant.

And then I imagine him just outside Asheville, prowling like a child around the Vanderbilts' mansion at Biltmore, touted as the most beautiful house in America. He loved the rich so much! There are writers who write to seduce women; he wrote to get closer to the rich, and to live a bit like them. These rich here, then ... This combination, in one place, of Loire chateaux and the Villa Borghese! This intersection, in one family, of the Vanderbilt side and the Gatsby side! I visit this mansion. I look at the portrait, in the tidy ground-floor living room, of Cornelius Vanderbilt, the first offspring of that name. I can't imagine Fitzgerald's not being irresistibly drawn to this blending of pomp and style, easy money and austere rectitude. I can't imagine that living here, in Asheville, he didn't do everything—really everything, as he used to in his prime—to get himself invited. At the same time, I know—and it was from him I learned it—that there's never a second chance for American heroes. And I know that they most likely ignored him, even rejected him outright: Who? F. Scott Fitzgerald? Oh ... the failed writer. The former dandy. The husband of the madwoman. The outcast. Get lost!

Forgive me, Asheville. Forgive me, all you in Asheville who welcomed me so warmly. Those days, in my eyes, will have the lasting perfume of a wretched past. This town will remain linked with the image of this great writer destroyed, reduced to obscurity, disowned. Poor Belgium, said Baudelaire toward the end. Poor North Carolina, the F. Scott Fitzgerald of the last days might have said. In his name, and in the name, too, of so many writers that America has humiliated or driven mad, I say it.

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MARS VERSUS VENUS, AND VICE VERSA

Headed for Virginia, and for Norfolk, which is, if I'm not mistaken, one of the oldest towns in a state that was one of the original thirteen in the Union.

It's the stopover town, halfway between Florida and New York, where, after Tocqueville had decided to skip Charleston for lack of time, he arrived on January 15, 1832, and boarded the ship that would take him to Washington.

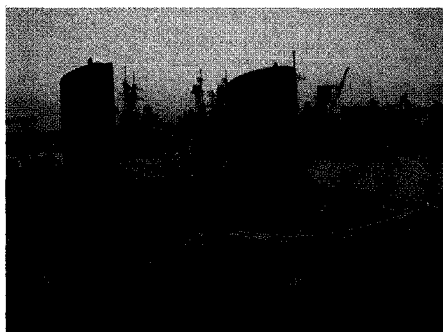
Today, along with San Diego, it's home to one of the biggest naval bases in the country, and it's also the headquarters of the United States Joint Forces Command, from which the coordination of American forces throughout the world is directed. It's also—almost more important—the heart of the new Allied Command Transformation, the strategic structure that since the Prague NATO summit of 2002 has been in charge of research and development geared toward the overhaul of the Atlantic Alliance.

I can't prevent myself from thinking, while the ensign shows me this concentrated intelligence at the heart of the submarine, that so little is needed (think of the *Kursk*, but also of the *Thresher* and the *Scorpion*, which were American) to transform this admirably buoyant capsule into a coffin.

And when I visit the microscopic cabins into which they've managed to cram as many as twelve bunk beds; when I see the hundreds of cans of food that for lack of space have been lined up on the floor, on which people are standing and which in some places cause the tallest men to walk bent over, I can't prevent myself, as I imagine this closed world, so perfectly silent, where soon no daylight will penetrate, from realizing that of all the prisons I've visited, this one may be the most terrifying of all.

But when it comes down to it, there really is immense power here.

The wonder of high technology, of precision, of force.



I leave Norfolk wondering if a visit to a nuclear submarine would be possible in my country. It's hard to envision. So I wonder about the motivations of my guides. American democracy again? The taste for transparency that Tocqueville noted as a basic component of its ethos?

When you think of the American Army, you think of GIs and land forces.

When you think of American power, or the so-called American empire, you think of the human—all too human—troops of the expeditionary corps in Iraq. Or, if you are a European, you think of the Portuguese, Italian, or Belgian NATO bases that, it should be stressed, no longer frighten anybody very much.

Well, here in Norfolk it is hard to be so blasé.

The power is palpable.

It is in this research center in Norfolk, ultra high-tech, almost ethereal, that the strategic plans for the future are worked out.

It is in this science-fiction port, tacked on to the old town of traditional southern houses, where cruisers, battle-ships, colossal aircraft carriers, SSN attack submarines, SSBN strategic submarines, all lie at anchor.

And it is in this particular submarine, the USS *Scranton* (SSN 756), 360 feet long, 7,000 tons, one of the most modern submarines in the fleet, where I have the opportunity to spend half a day—escorted by a young ensign with shoulder-length blonde hair, so surprisingly charming that if not for her apparel, the military cap cleverly tilted over her ear, nothing would give her away as a sailor on assignment.

It's a fragile power, of course.

These nuclear-powered turbines ...

This engine room in the stern, which looks like the second stage of a rocket ...

These diving controls fore and aft, incredibly complex, which govern the trim or the immersion of the submarine ...

These ballast tanks that, depending on whether they're filled with seawater or air, allow the submarine to dive or stay on the surface ...

These diabolical thermal pressures that make the walls of the ship expand, contract, or, at worst, break apart, depending on the location ...

These heating and cooling systems ...

These sonars ...

These antennae that are passive (able to capture the slightest noise, the least vibration outside) or active (emitting a sonar pulse that enables one to calculate, by measuring the time it takes for the echo to bounce back, the distance from a target or a reef, or to gauge the depth of ice or water) ...

These consoles and instrument panels—I'm not sure if they're used to control the reactor or the weapons (maybe both) ...

These missile-launch tubes and these jamming systems capable of tricking the enemy's torpedoes and making them explode in the open sea.

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Winston Churchill

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And then the missiles themselves—these tools of death, some of which, like the *Trident II*, on other submarines, can be equipped with multiple nuclear warheads, giving just one of these submarines a firepower many times that used on Hiroshima ...

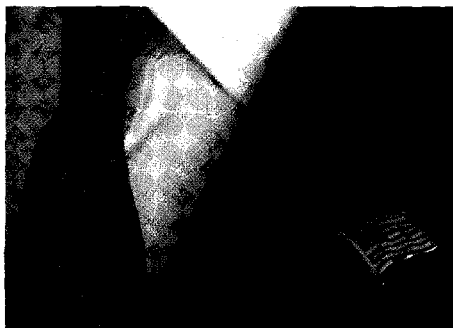
These torpedoes with magnetic sensors—summit of the art of destruction—which explode not on contact but beneath the targeted ship, and give off an energy from the blast comparable to a tidal wave, the result of which is that the hull, regardless of the solidity of the steel with which it is made, is inevitably torn in half.

The extreme sophistication of all this. Dizzying strategy, technology, logic. The conjoined dread and admiration that I feel when faced with these manifestations of American power.

I leave Norfolk wondering if such a visit would be possible in my country.

I think not, since it's hard to envision a foreign visitor's being offered such a comprehensive tour on a French nuclear-submarine base. So I wonder about the motivations of my guides.

American democracy again? The taste for transparency that Tocqueville, before many others, noted as a basic component of its ethos?



When I hear Kristol talk about how he was formed by the great antitotalitarian thinkers of the twentieth century—when I see him denounce the cultural relativism and the historicism that were used to excuse the most horrible dictatorships—it's my own history I find. And yet ...

A different relationship with secrecy? An open-society aspect even in these zones that tend to be closed everywhere else?

Or else it is this other hypothesis that crosses my mind when I think I can detect a fleeting gleam of irony in the eyes of the pretty *ensign*, who is telling me for the umpteenth time about the force of a cumulative strike of the MK-48 torpedoes and Tomahawk missiles stored in the ship: Maybe this open-door operation is, in its way, a demonstration of force. Maybe this kind of guided tour is an integral part of the program of the largest military in the world when it has to deal with a representative (who, moreover, is French) of a country that is in principle an ally. Maybe it's just a case of Mars parading before Venus and telling her, offhandedly, in the good-natured, frank tone suitable to friendly relationships, "This is who we are, and what we are capable of. Take note of the force of your ally before you claim to be its rival, or even its partner. In the

era of a multilateralist ideal that has reached an impasse, that, dear Frenchmen, would be wise policy ..."

A CONVERSATION WITH RICHARD PERLE

Stylish furniture.

A picture of Arthur Rimbaud on the wall.

A big, rustic kitchen that appears to be one of his favorite rooms—perhaps a discreet homage to Albert Wohlstetter, his intellectual master, whose fiercest passions, they say, included the culinary arts as well as math and strategic planning.

A lot of books, a lot of objects and knickknacks, some of them brought back from the south of France, where this hawk famous for his Francophobia, this man who declared at the height of the tension between Presidents Bush and Chirac that France had "aligned itself with Saddam" and is "no longer the ally it once was," actually has a second home.

As he makes coffee, we begin talking about the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, whose work he seems to know.

I ask Perle if it is true that his first calling was literature, and that his dream as a young man was to teach a course not on international strategy but on Joyce and the genesis

of *Finnegans Wake*. He shrugs his shoulders a little sadly, but doesn't answer.

We talk about Tocqueville, and he points out, annoyed, that we shouldn't exaggerate; my compatriot certainly didn't foresee everything that has happened to the United States in the past century, and he overlooked America's quasi-religious belief in a mission—which, according to Perle, the Founding Fathers clearly evinced.

And here we are, facing each other in this garden covered with dead leaves and bathed in sunlight, outside his quaint house in Maryland, where he's been spending most of his time ever since allegations of a conflict of interest forced him to resign from his chairmanship of the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board (he later left the board altogether). Here, sitting on a simple wooden bench, his face sagging and tired, his eyes terribly wrinkled, wearing one of those gray shirts with white collars that I've noticed in most of his photos but which he is wearing now

BARRY LEWIS/NETWORK PHOTOGRAPHERS

without a tie—here is the great architect of American policy in Iraq, out of a job.

Where does he stand now?

What does he say two years later about this war that he and his friend Paul Wolfowitz helped chart, which is eliciting condemnation or debate throughout the world?

To my great surprise, Perle begins by giving vent to reservations about the way the whole thing has been conducted.

He denies, by the way, having been the architect I call him; he insists that he has never, alas, been in a position to decide anything; and he begins by telling me, imitating “our friend Althusser,” about all the things that “cannot last any longer”—not, this time, in the Communist Party but in America’s war policy in Iraq.

He regrets, for instance, that there weren’t more Iraqi troops alongside the Americans from the beginning.

He still has confidence in Ahmed Chalabi, who was also a disciple of Wohlstetter’s, and he maintains that Chalabi refuses to transform himself into a manipulative, unscrupulous, venal politician like everyone else in Washington now.

What’s more, he grumbles, fiddling with his shirt collar as if the mere idea of it were suffocating him—what’s more, he thinks today that the administration committed a major mistake, and that this mistake was neglecting to be sure of the support of the local armed forces from the beginning, as was done in Afghanistan. “We needed scouts,” he says angrily. “Iraqi scouts, and that’s why, even though we started out as liberators, we’re turning into an occupying force.”

About the basic principle, though, of the validity of the war itself; about the appropriateness of the choice that right after 9/11 consisted of targeting Saddam Hussein and bringing him down; about the political aim, then and now, of establishing democracy, in this country martyred and abandoned by the West, in this land of suffering and of methodically ignored mass graves, Perle hasn’t changed one iota. And I even have the feeling that his recovered freedom of speech only makes him more eloquent in hammering home his conviction that no source of disorder or insecurity in this world is worse than the existence of dictatorships and our indulgence of them.

This conversation has the effect of reviving my old questions not about the war itself—of which I disapproved from the first day, and of which my analysis hasn’t varied at all—but about these strange characters whom we in France stubbornly persist in demonizing (“princes of darkness”) or ridiculing with simplistic epithets (“neo-cons,” which can also mean, in French, “neo-dummies”), but who aren’t quite as uni-dimensional as they may seem.

Sometimes, listening to this Bush follower who, among other peculiarities, has remained a registered Democrat and boasts about it, I say to myself, Of course he’s right. How can one be against the overthrow of such a tyrant? How can one spend a lifetime, as I have done, deploring the inac-

tion of rich countries, their pusillanimity, their recurrent Munichism when faced with enemies bent on destroying them and willing to try anything to acquire the means of doing so, and not be delighted when in the most powerful democracy in the world there finally appears a generation of intellectuals who get close to the top and concretely work for the universalization of human rights and freedom?

But then other times I catch a word, an intonation, an offhand phrase, implying that the actual presence or absence in Baghdad of weapons of mass destruction isn’t so important after all. Or I hear a dismissal of people who, like me, recoil from the idea of a preventive war as being similar to a man who waits till he’s sick to sign up for health insurance. Or I hear something that I interpret as a condemnation of the Geneva road map advocating a division of land between Israelis and Palestinians, which I ardently support. It’s a slight hint of populism, a sudden frivolity, a reaction like that of an outraged old conservative when he asks me if Althusser paid the penalty for strangling his wife and I tell him no, a small cabal of people at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, where he taught, managed to protect him and keep him from going to jail. Or I hear an unfair phrase about John Kerry or his wife. So I swing over to the other side; I rear back internally; I tell myself that this man and I surely don’t belong to the same family.

That’s where I stand ...

WHAT SEPARATES ME— RADICALLY—FROM BILL KRISTOL?

I have been looking forward to this meeting.

First and foremost because of his surname, associated in my mind with a whole legendary landscape in which the saga of the American extreme left, the secrets of Alcove One at CCNY, the memory of the ideological jousts of Irving Kristol, his father, with Daniel Bell, Irving Howe, Nathan Glazer, and Gertrude Himmelfarb, Irving Kristol’s future wife, are all mixed together.

Also because of the idea that such a small magazine, the *Weekly Standard*—with a circulation that would seem somewhat ludicrous even on a French or European scale, nearly devoid of advertising, gray, printed on bad paper, never shying away from a long, sometimes indigestible text—can have such a significant influence, including, I am told, on the White House and the State Department.

And then, of course, because of the neo-conservative ideology itself, this famous neo-conservative ideology, the mystery of these people whose intellectual journey increasingly fascinates me. I tell myself that through his status as a journalist, through the autonomy of thought it grants him, through his family origins (although he himself doesn’t come from the extreme left), Kristol is, even more than Perle, an archetype of the neo-conservative. Are these neo-cons truly united? How does their thinking tally with Bush’s? What is the extent of their influence? What should I

think of David Brooks's analysis when he told me the other morning that the media were exaggerating the importance and the impact of this group? What should I think of his notion that this matter of neo-conservative intellectuals' taking Bush's brain by storm right after 9/11 is an invention of the extreme right in general and Pat Buchanan in particular, and that we aren't very far here from the Jewish-conspiracy theory?

In a way I'm disappointed. With his big-boss suit, his impeccably combed hair, his overfriendly showman manners, his laughing blue eyes, his florid complexion, the man oppo-

site me looks more like a leader of the American Enterprise Institute (based, perhaps not by chance, in the same building, one floor up) than like Europe's idea of an intellectual.

But on the other hand, my hopes are rewarded: the conversation is a long one, and as it progresses, in this modern, efficient office more reminiscent of the conference room in a commercial Manhattan bank than of the office of an editorialist or a man of ideas, I get, if not the answer, at least a part of the answer to the question of what it is that links me to, or separates me from, this man and others of his ilk.

What links us: history, intellectual genealogy, a certain number of formative experiences, the oldest and perhaps most essential of which seems to be his long rebellion against the way the West had consented to the enslavement of the countries in "captive Europe." When I hear Kristol talk about how his youth was formed by the great antitotalitarian thinkers of the twentieth century; when I see him get carried away about the cultural relativism and the historicism that were used to excuse the most horrible dictatorships; when I imagine him laying siege, as he did in the 1990s, to America's foreign-policy decision-makers in order to persuade them to intervene in Bosnia and then in Kosovo; and finally when I imagine him pleading against the Taliban and, even more, against our silent assent to the iron rule it imposed on Afghanistan, it's my own history I find. These are the dates of my own intellectual biography I see quickly pass by; I want to say that though our positions diverge, our axioms are shared.

What separates us: the positions, the differing conclusions that we draw from common premises in the Iraq affair. But certainly other subjects as well raise indications, throughout our conversation, of attitudes far from mine: the death penalty, for instance. I find, to my great surprise, that Kristol supports the death penalty; I find, too, that on the questions of abortion, gay marriage, and the place of religion in American politics he isn't far from the most extreme positions of the leading players in the Bush administration. Then there's the copy of the *Weekly Standard* I found in the waiting room and had time to leaf through before our interview. It's the issue that talks about the dedication of the Clinton Library, in Little Rock. I see that the *Weekly Standard* is a magazine in which you can read, under the byline of Matt Labash, an article crammed with the vilest gossip about the private life of the former president. Paula, Gennifer, Monica, Connie, Sally, Dolly, Susan—they're all there,

PRAYER

Artemis—virginal goddess of the hunt, thus
goddess of childbirth, protector of children, to whom
agonized women can cry out—

was not a name I thought of, a place to send
those sharp gasps, when you descended sideways,
still swimming against the narrow walls of me;

or later, after, the low moans, the mews,
as I throbbed like something flung from a great height
and could not be appeased; or in between,

a keening, you by then presenting, the cord—
the lifeline, tether, leash—lashed like a noose
round and round your neck by so much swimming.

I think what I said, if saying is what I did,
was *Sweet Jesus*, another virgin who knew
the body is first and last an animal,

it eats, shits, fucks, expels the fetus—or doesn't.
Midnight, lamplight in the barn, the farmer,
arm deep in the cow, turning, turning the calf;

and my father, a farmer, phoning up to ask
what had gone wrong; he could not keep his worry
out of his voice. Perhaps I should have prayed

to him, or to some other powerful god
assigned to *me*, when you were stalled
inside the birth canal; and also:

when they ripped you out and cut us free.

—ELLEN BRYANT VOIGT

Ellen Bryant Voigt is the author of six books of poems, including Shadow of Heaven (2002), a finalist for the National Book Award. She lives in Vermont.

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the “WOCS,” the “women of the Clinton scandals,” the Miss Arkansas, the women who aren’t quite whores, the ex-cover girls turned into married women, they’re all set down in ink, slammed, denounced, in this cartload of filth and accusation that presents itself as an article.

I sense that Kristol is annoyed when I mention it.

I sense that he thinks a European can’t accept this mingling of politics with such trash, so he plays it down.

Don’t jump to the conclusion that I believe in it, he seems to be saying. That’s just the deal, you understand—supporting a crusade for moral values is just the price we have to pay for a foreign policy that we can defend as a whole.

Suppose it is.

Let’s agree that his annoyance isn’t feigned.

In that case the whole question lies right there, and in my mind it’s almost worse.

When you uphold one goal of a given faction, do you have to uphold all its goals?

Because you’re in agreement about Iraq, do you have to force yourself to agree with the death penalty, creationism, the Christian Coalition and its pestilential practices?

When I have dinner with someone in a restaurant, do I have to order all the courses on the menu?

Or, on the contrary, isn’t it the privilege of what we call an intellectual—isn’t it his honor and, at core, his real strength, as well as his duty—to continue to defend his own colors, even the shades of those colors, even and especially when he lends his support to the government on a specific point?

Bill Kristol is listening to me, but I sense I’m not convincing him. And here I grasp, at least for now, the crux of what separates us.

A neo-conservative? No—he is a Platonist without the ideas. An adviser to princes without detachment or reservations. An antitotalitarian who at bottom, and whatever he may say, is not as faithful as he would like to think to the heritage of Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt—and who, for this reason, deprives himself of the necessary freedom that the status of intellectual should imply.

THE END OF HISTORY IS NO BANQUET

Washington, still. A visit with Francis Fukuyama. We met in Paris, a little over ten years ago, when everyone was talking about his book *The End of History and the Last Man*. I had at the time taken a strong stand against his argument. But I remember thinking—and saying—that whether one agreed with it or not, it was one of the boldest statements of the time. He himself is the prototype of an American intellectual. More precisely, he, unlike Kristol, seems to come close to the idea we in Europe have of an intellectual.

And I must admit that I’m happy to see him again, here in his little office full of books and stacked-up files, at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. He is lucid and sardonic, as much at ease with complex

conceptual gymnastics as with geostrategic considerations, as obviously fascinated by world-historical panoramas as by more down-to-earth political analysis. (One feature that strikes me about these major American intellectuals who are close to power and its think tanks: their ability to occupy not exactly two careers but two different intellectual cultures at the same time. Wohlstetter is an outstanding mathematician; Harvey Mansfield is a translator of Machiavelli and Tocqueville; Donald Kagan and Victor Davis Hanson are well versed in ancient Greece; not to speak of Wolfowitz, steeped in Hebrew, an eminent neo-Straussian.)

So we were talking, Fukuyama and I, about his famous first book, about the end of history.

I tell him—and this makes him laugh—that like Byron, he became famous in one night thanks to a conversation.

He tells me that he has read some of my writing on Islamic fundamentalism, but—and of course I’m not convinced by this—he doesn’t think Islamism is weighty enough to become the third totalitarianism that will set the great machinery of history back in motion.

Then we start talking about the war in Iraq, which, contrary to my expectations, he, unlike most other neo-conservatives, in fact condemned. We talk about one of his articles, “The Neoconservative Moment,” which he wrote in reaction to a speech given by Charles Krauthammer at the annual dinner of the American Enterprise Institute, and which was published in the summer 2004 issue of the neo-conservative journal *The National Interest*. This article unleashed one of those vigorous debates Fukuyama seems so good at provoking; barely a dozen pages long, it has his typically provocative, cold tone, and his typically Zen-like way of breaking everything in sight without seeming to touch it.

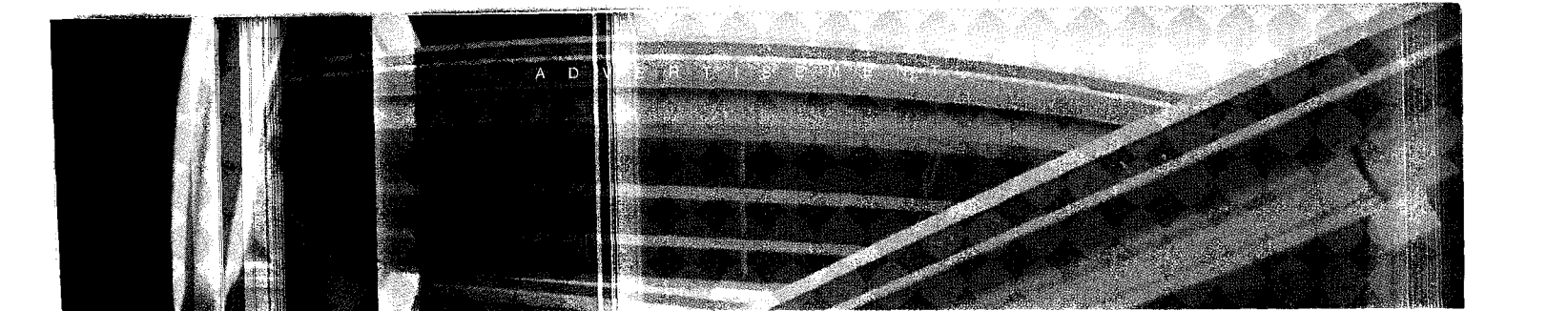
What’s the reason behind his condemnation of the war? What objection does he really have?

No moral objection; for a Hegelian, such an argument would be nonsensical.

No objection from a strategic point of view; the apostle of the end of history, this man who keeps telling us how the provinces of the empire will be brought into line with the victorious world order, could scarcely disagree with the plan to democratize Iraq.

Certainly not the traditional conservative idea that some cultures are better adapted to freedom than others; I sense that Fukuyama isn’t the least bit torn between two great poles, Irving Kristol and Samuel Huntington—between the ex-leftist who has on the whole remained faithful to the universalism of his youth and the postulator of a clash of civilizations who has great difficulty ridding himself of the stumbling block of relativism—and that it’s the former who remains closer to his heart.

No, his great subject, his chief and indeed only disagreement, has to do with the relationship to time that he thinks



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he can sense in most of his friends who are unconditional supporters of this war—their misunderstanding of the time it actually takes to build democracy, and hence of opportunity and political tactics. (There is also the argument that the pro-war stance is too close to the policies of Israel. But if that issue is raised in the *National Interest* article—if he may have been reproached for his way of “Likudizing” the opponent during his polemics with Krauthammer—it doesn’t come up in our conversation.)

These people are strange, is the gist of what he says to me.

They’ve spent their whole lives preaching against giving too much power to the government. They told us to beware of the naiveté of the social-engineering specialists who purported to be able to eradicate American poverty with one wave of their political wand. And then they lost all perspective as soon as it was a question of eradicating such poverty, along with the roots of despotism, 6,000 miles away. And they have complete faith in a political decision when it’s an issue—as a nation and a government are being constructed—of winning not just the war but also the peace. And they adopt the same “messianic” tone for which they’ve so often reproached their progressive adversaries as soon as it’s a matter of building a Western-style democracy, *ex nihilo*, in a country that’s never harbored such a concept!

Odd, this Hegelian who condemns the messianism of others.

Odd, this historicist who used to tell us that the absolute Spirit was about to arrive, and who starts praising the delays and difficulties of post-history.

Paradoxical, the spectacle of this disciple of Kojève, fed on Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* and on the prosopopeia of the Idea, reproaching others for their excessive idealism.

But captivating, nonetheless.

First of all because it’s another sign, this time inside a single ideological family, of the intensity, the vigor, the quality, of debate that so struck me during the Democratic and Republican conventions: Hegel plus Leo Strauss ... Hegelian providentialism chilled, almost reduced, by the “Greek” skepticism of the author of *The City and Man* ... That is the Fukuyama equation. Those are the metaphysical—thus political—coordinates of this agnostic-universalist, this pessimistic progressive. And it’s more than a variation—it’s actually a new position on the American political chessboard.

But above all I get the impression of finding here the first serious—I mean theoretically articulated—objection to the war. Before that operation was launched, I had written that because it mistook the target, because it was aiming at Iraq instead of worrying, for instance, about Pakistan, it was morally right but politically wrong. Quietly, almost whispering, with that special smile whose very reserve oddly

reveals a certain intensity, Fukuyama tells me that these people are to him—theoretician that he is of the inevitable triumph of democratic order—what Lenin was to Marx: by trying to act like angels, behaving as if time were not an issue, they condemn themselves to acting like idiots.

The problem with neo-conservatives is not, as Europeans think, their lack of a moral center or their cynicism. On the contrary, it’s an excess of morals. It’s the victory of mysticism over politics. They’re noble spirits who don’t do enough actual politics.

TWO (AT LEAST) RIGHTS

Flashback.

The scene occurs in Pittsburgh, three months ago, at the end of a fine autumn day.

Christopher Hitchens is the one who actually persuaded me to come.

We had taken opposite positions at a debate in New York about the war in Iraq (which he, like Kristol and Perle, ardently supports), and he had let slip in passing, in his very British way of mumbling important things, “Kissinger lecture in Pittsburgh; I’m giving another one, an hour later and a few blocks away, after a screening of *The Trials of Henry Kissinger*. You should come. You might enjoy yourself ...”

As soon as I get there I go to the Gypsy Café, a trendy bar in the South Side district where the enfant terrible of the intelligentsia and a crack team of fellow conspirators (someone from the Warhol museum, the editor of the alternative paper sponsoring Hitchens’s rival lecture, a producer of independent documentaries, a professor) are putting the last touches on what is turning out to be something of a guerrilla operation.

From there I go to Heinz Hall, where, in front of a room filled with burgundy-velvet armchairs that remind me more of a brothel in Maupassant than of a lecture hall, the secretary of state under Nixon and Ford utters, in his gruff, stentorian voice, a litany of self-satisfied platitudes (“the dust of China and India” ... the necessity to “identify big problems and reduce them to little problems” ... yes to the war, but a half-hearted yes, just for a short while, keeping in mind the perspective of “perpetual peace” that was “proclaimed by Immanuel Kant”).

Suddenly Hitchens arrives; he has evidently made a switch in tactics and, using another journalist’s pass, has been able without warning to get access to the inner lobby of the auditorium. The conspirator turned provocateur hurls abuse at the attendees near him (“Toads! You’re all toads who’ve come to listen to a toad ...”) before getting himself thrown out by security guards who, noticing me with him, throw me out too and force me to erase from my camera, in front of them, the part of the lecture I have filmed.

So we walk arm in arm into the night, with obligatory stops at bars on Penn and Liberty Avenues, and with a meager escort of reporters thrilled by the incident and the

excitement Hitchens is causing in their sleeping city: Death to toads! A kingdom of toads for a bottle of wine! On our way to the Harris Theater, where the film must be almost over, a signal that the discussion can begin ...

This film is Kissinger's nightmare, Hitchens says, delighted. Wherever that bastard goes, my film precedes or follows him. Wherever he talks, there's someone there during the question-and-answer session who asks him about his war crimes in Chile, in Indochina, in Timor. Do you realize that because of my film he can't travel anywhere freely? Do you know that in Paris a magistrate came looking for him, even to his suite at the Ritz? That son of a bitch ... Leave that lowly toad to us ... You'll see ...

We've arrived at the theater.

It's one of those independent art-house movie theaters, old-fashioned and militant, that still exist in some ordinary American towns. Black-and-white posters for *Grand Illusion* and *Citizen Kane*. Ads for the workshops, festivals, and retrospectives that the Pittsburgh Filmmakers are organizing here.



In front of a room filled with burgundy-velvet armchairs that remind me more of a brothel in Maupassant than of a lecture hall, the secretary of state under Nixon and Ford utters, in his gruff, stentorian voice, a litany of self-satisfied platitudes. Suddenly Hitchens arrives.

In front of the ticket office flyers saying "Kerry or Bush, it doesn't matter, as long as we get out of Iraq"—which is, of course, the exact opposite of Hitchens's stance.

And an audience in keeping with the place, made up of old leftists with salt-and-pepper ponytails, political tattoos on their forearms, pierced ears—and immediately I see that they're in the uncomfortable position of having come to applaud a cult film (this Kissinger trial, this ultra-left charge against Richard Nixon's secretary of state, is obviously all they care about) and also to express their incomprehension about what the film's progenitor has become. How can he, without renouncing what he has said about Kissinger, agree on the Iraq question with Bush, Rumsfeld, Cheney, Rice, and the various others who in their eyes are the new embodiment of the same old American right?

I'm watching Hitchens on the stage, behind his lectern.

I observe him suddenly energized, fielding questions, battling, making fun of his opponents, pleading, insulting, explaining that yes, he is against Saddam just as he was against Pinochet, it's the same fight that's going on, the same antitotalitarianism being replayed; democratic revolution (as Clémenceau said about the French Revolution)

"has to be taken as a whole"; *jihad* is just one more fascism. What a pity you didn't understand; you are the left wing of a big party of toads ...

The scene has its appeal.

It always takes a kind of courage to run the risk of disappointing or alienating your own followers; and in this case it takes courage to stand firm on both fronts—to stand in front of these 150 leftists for whom Hitchens used to be a hero, and who ask nothing more than to go on celebrating him as one, and tell them, "I am and I am not one of you. There is Hitchens No. 1, who is responsible for this film, and who, ten years later, wouldn't take one word or shot away from it. But there is Hitchens No. 2, who continues the fight without you, by supporting the war in Iraq."

That's not the essential point, though. The essential point is this: I see him active on both fronts at once, and not lowering his guard on either of them. I see him, unlike Kristol, not giving in about Vietnam on account of Iraq, and thus taking the risk, necessarily, of losing on both counts. I listen to him try Kissinger on two charges, because

he reproaches him for his role in Indochina in the 1960s but also for his far too flabby involvement, like that of so many of the realpolitik people, in this war against Islamic fundamentalism. And I tell myself that here, between the two branches of what from afar seems like *the* American conservative movement, is a debate, even a gulf, of which we have only the faintest conception in Europe.

You have to dig deeper, of course.

You have to try to get a better understanding of this conflict in the heart of the American right between the soft and the radical, the realists and the idealists.

You have to go far back into history—for instance, to the debates between the camps labeled Wilsonians and Jacksonians—and look for hidden keys to this quarrel between those who, like Kissinger, wage war in order to strengthen dictatorships and those who, like Hitchens, think of war as a vector of democracy in the world.

For now, it's a new sign of the reorganization of the political space that, I sense, has been coming for quite some time, and that is making real divisions emerge not so much between the two political parties as between factions, not yet named, within each of the two parties. ■

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BOOKS & CRITICS

OCTOBER 2005 | THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

REVIEWED THIS MONTH:

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by Eamon Duffy

The Mind of the Master Class

by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese
and Eugene D. Genovese

Crazy Horse

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Girl Sleuth: Nancy Drew and the Women Who Created Her

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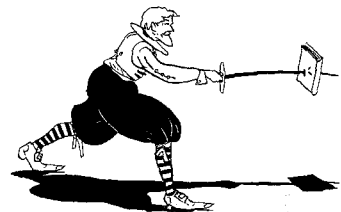
EDITOR'S CHOICE

Another World

What to read this month

BY BENJAMIN SCHWARZ

The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.” When reviewing history books I find myself quoting L. P. Hartley’s observation with annoying frequency, hoping that it will serve as an injunction to writers and a reminder to readers. History and historical biography have never been more popular, but many of the titles that appeal to educated general readers lack complexity and intellectual verve. The main reason for this is discomfort with the foreignness of the past among both the producers and the consumers of history books. Too many authors of recent popular works about the Founders, for instance, are obviously not at home in the eighteenth century. Their grasp of its religion, attitudes, mores, manners, and intellectual climate is unsure, and they lack command of the ideological, political, sectional, and social differences that divided the early republic. To me, their protagonists come off as guys in powdered wigs. But a still greater problem with reflexively approaching history in terms of the present is that it often leads to praising or condemning the past rather than comprehending it. Take the issue of the Founders and slavery. Readers and popular authors usually adopt one of two opposite but erroneous postures. Either they apply twenty-first-century standards and castigate the slave-owning Founders as racists and hypocrites, or—worse—they see those Founders as modern liberals who just happened to own slaves. Patrick Henry, George Washington, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, John Marshall, James Monroe, Henry Clay, and Andrew Jackson subscribed to a system built on unlimited violence and were willing to order that men and women be beaten or maimed to ensure that they served their masters’ will. That these men were, in Jefferson’s words, “nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny” may or may not mean they were evil (a question really beyond the purview of the historian), but it certainly means that their psychology and outlook were in essential ways deeply alien to our own. Sophisticated history neither comforts readers nor seeks to arouse their righteous indignation. Rather, it reveals to them other ways of looking at and understanding the world and the human condition; it vexes them and stirs them from their complacency—be it moral, temporal,

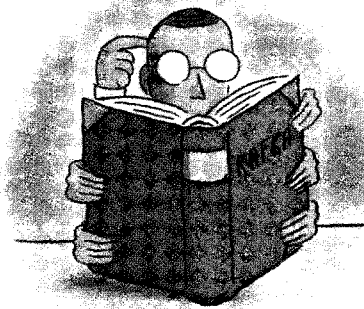


or psychological. Here are a new and two recently reissued history books, on very different subjects, that do just that.

The Stripping of the Altars,

by Eamon Duffy (Yale). The winners define the past. For 400 years the British popular and scholarly minds, possessed by Protestant and Whiggish triumphalism, believed that superstition, a disengaged laity, a corrupt priesthood, and pagan accretions had enervated the late-medieval English Church—and thus ripened it for reformation, a process embraced by the people. This vigorous and eloquent book, a work of daring revision and a masterpiece of the historical imagination, utterly transformed that thinking in 1992, when it was first published (this just-released second edition incorporates some scholarly qualifications, but Duffy's interpretation in its essential aspects stands). At once meticulous and lush, *The Stripping of the Altars* patiently and systematically recovers the lost world of medieval English Catholicism. Brilliantly examining the abundant art-historical evidence along with an array of documents from liturgical books to wills, Duffy, a historian at Cambridge, constructs an elaborate portrait of ordinary people's rich and vital religious life, characterized by the web of festivals, rituals, and images that bound their society together. He focuses not on doctrine and institutions but instead on the externals of religion (sacraments and ceremonies, altars, processions, lights, and images), conveying how liturgy—"that great seasonal cycle of fast and festival, of ritual observance and symbolic gesture"—shaped believers' "perception of the world and their place in it." By taking this alien world seriously, on its own terms, he reveals to modern readers the power and pull of its distinctive religious culture. But while the first two thirds of this book is a deeply textured work of historical anthropology, the last third is a gripping narrative history, as Duffy traces the way the

English Reformation (a process supported by a tiny minority, and deeply if ineffectively opposed by a population cowed by the new and crushing force of the monarchy) eradicated a thousand years of tradition and ritual. (He rightly emphasizes the psychological and spiritual impact of Henry VIII's and Elizabeth I's lavish devastation of the physical culture of the late-medieval Church—a point Margaret Aston made memorably in her *England's Iconoclasts*, but which Duffy vividly brings home with his discerning and disturbing photographs of whitewashed frescoes and smashed and defaced statues, stained glass, shrines, and altars.) Duffy's most significant contribution by far is to elucidate the fragility of even



deeply rooted ways of life: he convincingly demonstrates that for better or worse, the Reformation was "a great cultural hiatus, which had dug a ditch, deep and dividing, between the English people and their past"—a past that over merely three generations became a distant world, impossible for them to look back on as their own. A wholly compelling book (it was a best seller in the UK), this will appeal to any reader who wants to enter and understand another world (and isn't that why we read in the first place?). After you finish it, Shakespeare's haunting line from Sonnet 73, about the destruction of the monasteries—"Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang" (which, astonishingly, Duffy resists quoting)—will resonate as never before.

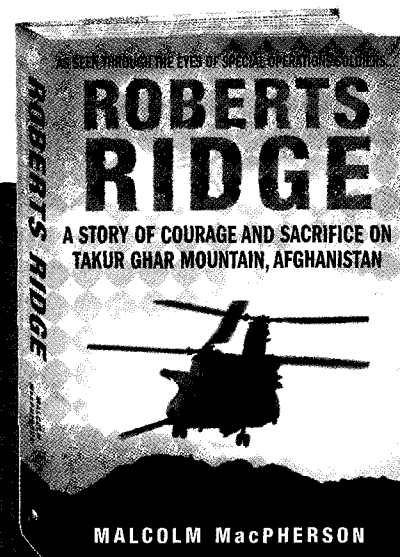
The Mind of the Master Class,

by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese (Cambridge). This country's greatest living historian, Eugene D. Genovese has for more than forty years been analyzing with penetration and subtlety nearly every facet of American slavery: its economics; its ideology; its place in the national and global markets; the life, character, and culture of the slaves; slave rebellion and resistance throughout the New World; and the world view of the slaveholders—a subject to which he has returned throughout his career and which he scrutinizes here with his wife, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese (who has written, among other works, *Within the Plantation Household*, a finely shaded study of the tangled and fraught relations between women slaveholders and women slaves). Genovese has doggedly pursued the truth for as long as necessary and regardless of its ramifications. His ultimate ambition has been to write the definitive study of southern slaveholders (of which this book will undoubtedly form the largest single part), but to fulfill that goal he had first to fathom the world of the slaves. In doing so, Genovese, then a Marxist and an atheist, was compelled to accept that Christianity formed the core of slave life; despite his predispositions, he therefore made it the cynosure of his study. That study amounted to a ten-year "detour," which resulted in *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, the most insightful book ever written about American slaves and the most lasting work of American historical scholarship since the Second World War. Since completing that detour Genovese has been laying the groundwork for this long-awaited book in articles and monographs on topics ranging from legal history to theology, sometimes alone, sometimes with his wife (they collaborated on the theoretically daring and sophisticated essays collected in *Fruits of Merchant Capital: Slavery and Bourgeois Property in the Rise and Expansion of Capitalism*). A work brilliant but at times exasperating, always tough-minded, often mischievous, and occasionally disappointing, the

800-plus-page *The Mind of the Master Class* is impossibly rich—the authors probe an astonishing variety of nearly always recondite subjects, including elite slaveholders' ideas about the Gracchi, David Hume's *History of England*, and the French Revolution—but its scope is in fact narrower than its title implies. Unlike the opening section of *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, a tour de force that surveyed diaries, plantation records, and letters to delineate the paternalistic ideology, attitudes, and practices of elite slaveholders (although the small size of plantations in the American South constituted the most conspicuous difference between that slave society and those in other areas of the New World, Genovese, a good Gramscian, has always focused on the wealthiest planters, holding that this "master class" largely determined the values of the society it ruled), this book defines their "mind" by analyzing the writings of antebellum southern intellectuals—a cosmopolitan, highly educated, remarkably capable group of political economists, classicists, jurists, politicians, historians, writers, political theorists, theologians, and ministers. But the extent to which intellectuals reflect the attitudes of the society, even the elite society, in which they're embedded is always problematic, and perhaps especially so in the antebellum South (as Michael O'Brien carefully points out in his recent Bancroft Prize-winning work about many of the very same southern intellectuals, *Conjectures of Order*). Moreover, this book hardly presents a comprehensive rendering of the nabobs' world view: the Genoveses tantalizingly refer to "volumes now in draft" that will assess many of the most essential and controversial aspects of the slaveholding intellectuals' concepts, including their critique of capitalism, their proslavery ideology, and the acceptance of that ideology by political leaders and the clergy. In this volume the authors illuminate in their characteristically energetic prose the myriad ways in which the master-slave relationship "permeated the lives and thought" not merely of

elite slaveholders but of their whole society. In doing so they elucidate the master class's deeply learned relationship to Christianity and to history (especially classical culture), which in turn highlights the tension between tradition and modernity in antebellum southern thought. Their chronicle attests to the Genoveses' more general view of the Old South as a non-capitalist society increasingly hostile to but inseparable from "the expanding capitalism from which it was born." Among its many contributions it provides significant and powerful support to the now academically unfashionable argument that the antebellum North and South were separate cultures with divergent political, economic, moral, and religious values; a work of searching historical anthropology, it reveals a profoundly alien society and culture. The Genoveses have accomplished the most difficult and intellectually imaginative feat of the historian: they have allowed us to understand the past on its own terms.

Some critics would charge that they've done more than that. Here, as elsewhere in their work, although the Genoveses don't shrink from the enormities inherent in slavery, they nevertheless declare (somewhat ostentatiously) that they "do not disguise ... our respect for the slaveholders ... nor do we disguise our admiration for much in their character and achievements." But to indict the authors for what is now called insensitivity (and they will be so indicted) is to ignore the psychological acuity and tragic sensibility that they bring to their subject. In defining the slaveholders' peculiar characteristics and world view, the Genoveses dissect the graciousness and generosity, the noblesse oblige and courage, the frankness and sense of ease, that were entirely common. Nevertheless, they are at pains to show that slaveholding wasn't a flaw in an otherwise admirable makeup but was intrinsic to that makeup—that is, they make plain that the admirable grew out of the loathsome (a pattern all too familiar to students of southern history). Hence they open their



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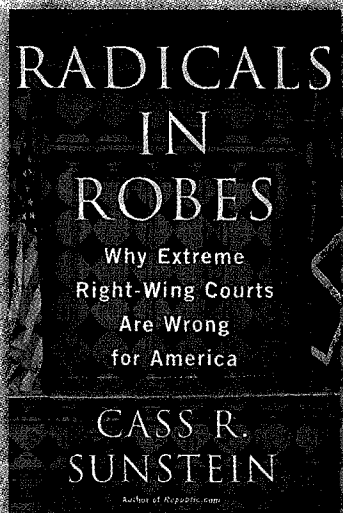
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book with Santayana's remark "The necessity of rejecting and destroying some things that are beautiful is the deepest curse of existence." True, they convincingly argue that a paternalist ethos often mitigated slavery; they reveal that the master class internalized Christian and chivalric values, which, they chillingly write, made its members "less dangerous human beings"; they demonstrate that in defending the peculiar institution southern theologians consistently bested their northern opponents in biblical exegeses (the Old Testament patriarchs owned slaves, Jesus didn't condemn slavery, and Paul and other New Testament writers sanctioned it); they show that slaveholders subscribed to "a code that made the ultimate test of a gentleman the humane treatment of his slaves"—but at the same time, in their explication of the psychology of slaveholding, which emerges from their deep and nuanced grasp of Christian doctrine, the authors upend the arguments of the slaveholders and of their modern apologists. They repeatedly dismiss as "psychologically naïve" the notion that slaveholders (able, though not licensed, to give free rein to their tempers and impulses) would invariably treat their slaves well because it was in their pecuniary interest to do so. While they admit the intellectual rigor and sincerity of the slaveholding theologians' arguments, they simultaneously suggest the vacuity of those arguments: as Christians the slaveholders acknowledged that men are weak and sinful creatures who if given absolute power will abuse it. Because slavery perforce granted masters such power, the Bible, although it didn't condemn slavery, did condemn the sins that grew inevitably from it (C. S. Lewis wrote, "Aristotle said that some people were only fit to be slaves. I do not contradict him. But I reject slavery because I see no men fit to be masters"). In exploring their terrible and complex subject with honesty and sympathy, the authors have grappled heroically with the ambiguity at the heart of history and in the heart of man.

Crazy Horse, by Mari Sandoz (Nebraska). Sandoz, the daughter of Swiss immigrants, was born in 1896 on a homestead in northwestern Nebraska, a region Crazy Horse and his band had roamed just decades before. Growing up listening to the stories of old Indians and plainsmen, she developed an uncanny receptivity to the Indian perspective and way of life, which in her writing she married to exhaustive research. (She had been a researcher at the Nebraska State Historical Society, and in preparation for this book, first published in 1942, she immersed herself in all the relevant archives. In 1930 she journeyed 3,000 miles through Sioux country, interviewing friends and relatives of her subject and witnesses to the events she chronicled; Indians who were averse to talking with other whites would usually speak freely to her.) She conceived this densely packed story of Crazy Horse and his people, and of the epic struggle between whites and Indians on the northern Plains, with the eye of an ethnologist. Writing from an Indian point of view and in Indian language patterns (she used the same devices in *Cheyenne Autumn*, her immensely sad chronicle of the doomed flight of a small band of Cheyenne from their hated Oklahoma reservation to their homeland in Montana in 1878–1879), Sandoz displayed an exquisite sensitivity to the spiritual and cultural impact of landscape and topography, and intensely conveyed the emotional, psychological, and religious universe of the Plains Indians. (In the introduction to this new edition the Indian writer and activist Vine Deloria Jr., who is famously critical of white anthropologists, avers that Sandoz "captured nuances that only a few would know and understand.") That sensitivity makes this, the most accomplished biography of Crazy Horse and one of the best and most moving books ever written about the American West, a strange, often unsettling work. ▀

Benjamin Schwarz is the literary editor and the national editor of The Atlantic.

BOOKS

The Secret of the Old Saw

Nancy Drew has two mommies

BY SANDRA TSING LOH

Yes, I was one of the slightly vintage women who let out a shriek when we saw it at Costco: The Nancy Drew Mystery Stories, a complete boxed set, fifty-six familiar yellow spines, shrink-wrapped. I can't remember now if it was \$100 or \$200 or \$500, but I immediately paid it, with shaking hands. Surely my six-year-old niece or my preschool-aged daughters would eventually enjoy—indeed, would require—this treasure trove.

But that night it was I who jabbed car keys through plastic, removing the first five Nancys, a big fistful of them, like a furtive Costco glutton. I bent open *The Secret of the Old Clock*, and there it all was—titian hair, blue convertible, River Heights. But what I was flashing on most from pre-adolescence was the addiction. One lucky snatch at the corner Bookmobile and there you had it, your personal inhalant, whispering to you through an otherwise tedious afternoon. *The Sign of the Twisted Candles*, *The Clue of the Tapping Heels*, *The Mystery of the Tolling Bell*, *The Secret of the Wooden Lady*—Carolyn Keene's rhythms alone were hypnotic; I'd be clawing the shelves if she'd penned *The Secret in the Old Hamper*, *The Clue in the Cat Box*, or *The Mysterious Handbag*.

As I read, a calm came over me. Nancy Drew's household is such a perfect triangle. With Nancy at the apex, to the left is Hannah Gruen (chicken sandwiches, fresh apple crumble) and to the right is handsome, pleasantly distracted Carson Drew (always working, but never too busy to take a call). What post-feminist woman doesn't yearn for a Hannah and a Carson? In my own grimly equitable marriage I have a Hannah Gruen who disagrees with where I put the spatula and a Carson Drew who suspects that the pro-



fessional quagmires I routinely wade into are all my fault. Worse still, unlike the titian-haired sleuth, I'm expected to earn money and do chores. Who can solve mysteries under these conditions? Who can hear herself think? Coordinated blue traveling suit plus heels? Forget it.

Nancy has beauty (which she expends little effort on), fame (which she impatiently brushes off), and a boyfriend, Ned (whose nuts, from lack of use, have long since dropped off). But the real allure of Nancy Drew is that, almost uniquely among classic or modern heroines, she can follow—is allowed to follow—a train of thought. The plot opens ever outward for her, her speeding blue convertible a metaphor for the sure-shot arrow of her intellect, the splendidly whizzing shaft of the maiden huntress Diana. For clever girls

of all ages (blonde, brunette, or otherwise) it's a rare treat to read stories in which our heroine's emotions come alive not with the love of a good man but with the pursuit of a bad one. Who doesn't thrill to the adrenaline-charged

arrival of a "hunch"—triggering Nancy's trademark excitement, her thoughts swirling, eyes sparkling, fingers deliciously drumming with impatience to get into the library and pore over long-forgotten

River Heights records that might reveal a clue about some suspicious handyman with a name like Nathaniel Mordechai Crumbley? Who doesn't lust for a chandelier-filled Civil War-era mansion to tap, panel by panel, in search of a secret passage, or maybe jewels? I mean, think of having an unbroken week—seven whole days—to get up every morning with nothing more on

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Because forget sex and romance; the solving of puzzles, mental trial and error, the deeply pleasurable act of raveling and unraveling—therein lies a secret part of the female psyche. (Knitting, anyone? There ought to be a movie celebrating this complex craft, which, if you ever get hooked, can give you—as it did me and a surprising number of women I know—no less than an emotional foundation. I see it as a Henry Jaglom, Sundance Channel movie, all monologues straight to camera: *Women Knitting*.) I think of a girlfriend I ran into recently—a sometime playwright, sometime public-radio arts commentator. While we pondered life in our forties, she charmingly admitted, "I've given up on my artistic ambitions—nowadays my happiest mornings are doing the crossword." I knew exactly what she meant! How often

this is a mystery story") Rehak shows she has a finger on the pulse of the faithful. A proper sleuth for grown-up girls, Rehak—in prose steely, lovely, and precise—explores why Nancy Drew has remained so popular since her arrival, in 1930, and answers the question Who was the mysterious Carolyn Keene?

Given her brainy if virginal nature, it's perhaps fitting that Nancy Drew burst full-grown, Athena-like, out of a father's head. He was the children's-book mogul Edward Stratemeyer, whose expertise at the time—he wrote and published juvenile fiction for forty years, much of it under the auspices of his syndicate of writers and editors—was almost Alan Greenspan-esque. He'd discovered, for instance, that writing under pen names such as Arthur M. Winfield and Laura Lee Hope actually boosted sales. (For the curious, Stratemeyer's Carolyn Keene began life as Louise Keene.) Also, he was not averse

For clever girls of all ages it's a rare treat to read stories in which our heroine's emotions come alive not with the love of a good man but with the pursuit of a bad one.

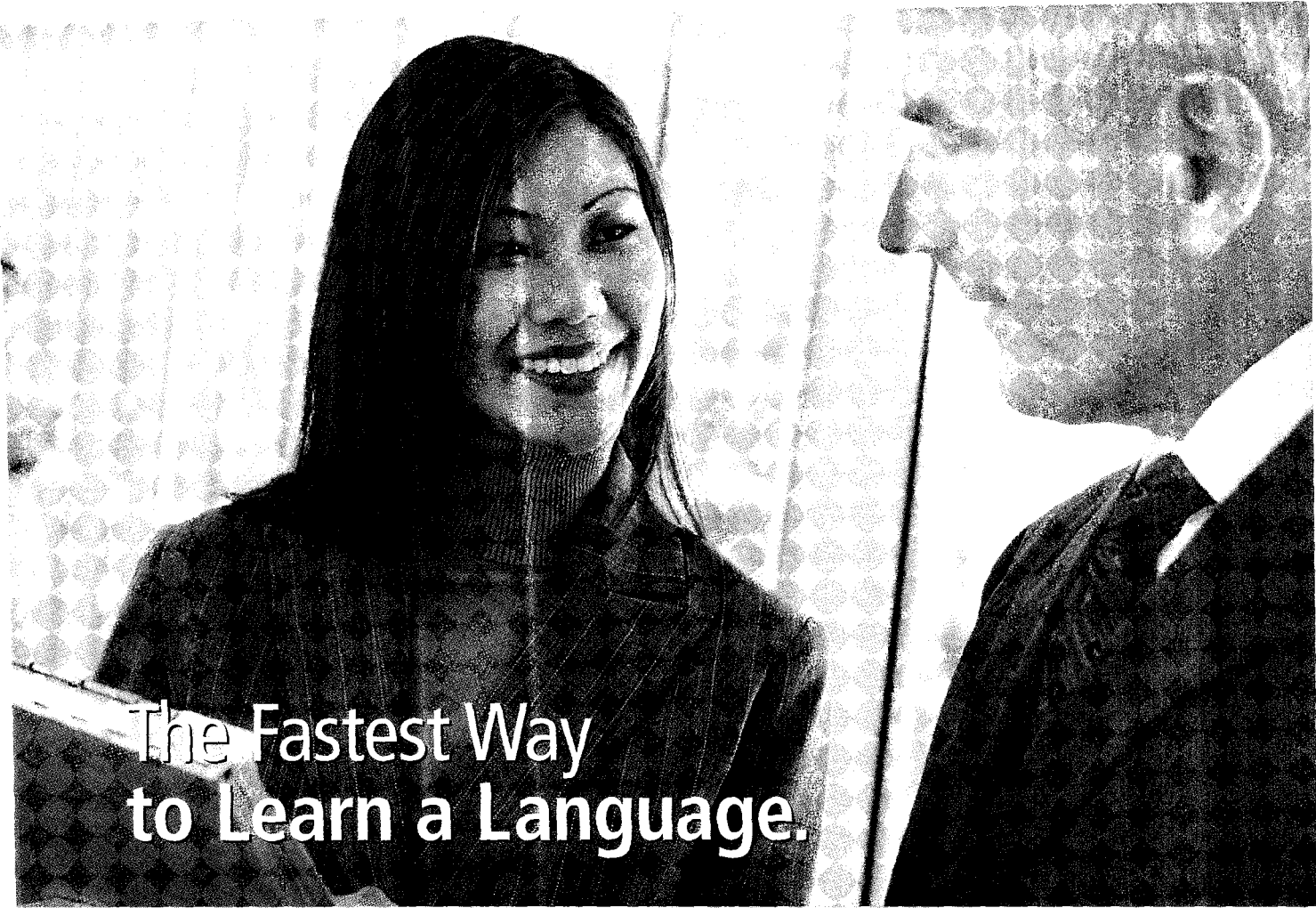
do I long to just sit in my office and play computer solitaire all day, with as much intensity as I want, without having to make a living, feed my children, or converse with my husband? But no, these people I live with seem to do little more than encroach on mother's hallowed puzzle time. Full of needs, they don't seem to understand their Hannah/Carson roles. While their mistress is intellectually engrossed, with her keen, attractive excitement, they should unobtrusively be bringing her warm plates of food, sharpened pencils, fresh checkbooks.

Fantasy? Who wants to be Catherine Zeta-Jones (with high-maintenance Michael Douglas in tow) when you could be Nancy?

And now, for Nancy Drew fanciers old and young, comes Melanie Rehak's *Girl Sleuth: Nancy Drew and the Women Who Created Her*. With her first sentence ("Grab your magnifying glass, because

to throwing ever new leading characters against the wall and seeing who stuck. Aside from the Hardy Boys and the Bobbsey Twins, Stratemeyer's somewhat incestuous if lesser-known brainchildren included the Rover Boys, the Blythe Girls, the Outdoor Girls, the Motor Girls, Ruth Fielding, Doris Force, and Perry Pierce. As Margaret Penrose he had a promising start in Dorothy Dale, but upon Dorothy's engagement sales immediately tanked.

It was a mistake his syndicate would not repeat. In September of 1929 Stratemeyer pitched a new series, featuring "an up-to-date American girl at her best, bright, clever, resourceful, and full of energy." Her name would be Stella Strong, Diana Drew, Diana Dare, Helen Hale, Nan Nelson, or Nan Drew (which the publishers, Grosset & Dunlap, eventually lengthened to Nancy). His first five plots were, to say the least, marvels of literary economy. For instance:



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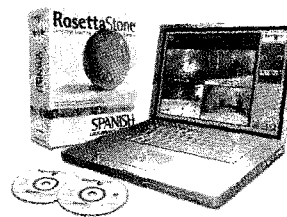
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THE MYSTERY AT SHADOW RANCH
A thrilling tale of mysterious doings at various places in the valley. Many thought that robberies of rich homes were contemplated. It remained for Stella Strong to clear up the perplexities.

For \$125 a pop (with the syndicate keeping all rights in perpetuity), ghostwriters would flesh out books in the trademark Stratemeyer style: "We do not ask for what is commonly called 'fine writing,' (usually another name for what is tedious and cumbersome) but want something full of 'ginger' and action." Although dastardly villains were important (a personal favorite, namewise: Zany Shaw), it was the "ginger" and action that made Stratemeyer children's books the reading equivalent of \$5.00 crack bags. Rehak describes an illuminating find made by Stratemeyer's daughter Harriet.

Looking over a book manuscript one afternoon, she discovered an entire page of action that had been carefully written by a ghostwriter and then crossed out by Stratemeyer in the editing process. Instead, written at the top of the page was the single word "CRASH!" On another, the entire introduction had been replaced by the one emphatic "BANG!"

But where was the ghostwriter who could do justice to Stella/Nancy? Enter—CRASH!—Mildred Augustine Wirt Benson. Perfectly cast for this tale, Mildred was a true character, evoked by Rehak as a kind of Iowa-born Katharine Hepburn. A diving champion, xylophone player, and aviator, she was the first woman to get a master's degree in journalism from the University of Iowa, after which she refused to write for the women's pages, calling them "jams and jellies." Spry into her old age, described by someone who knew her as having "a tangle of white curls and the dismissive air of Robert De Niro," she reportedly once snapped to a fellow journalist, "I gotta go interview some old fogey." At the time, she was ninety-three.

One hesitates to say BANG! (never mind that it is habit-forming), but Nancy Drew's story did indeed then take a hair-pin turn. Not only was the first Nancy Drew, published on April 28, 1930, an

immediate success (the allure of River Heights strong even in—or perhaps because of—a depression), but Edward Stratemeyer died of pneumonia just twelve days later. The syndicate fell at once into the hands of his two grieving daughters, Edna and most of all Harriet, who continued to carry the Nancy Drew torch through the next five decades.

And thus begins the real drama of Rehak's book: the ensuing conflict between Harriet the boss and Mildred the ghostwriter. Together they made up the yin and yang, if you will, of the authorial ur-entity we've come to know as Carolyn Keene. Their disagreements were not so much about plot and character mechanics. No, as Mildred would remember it years later, what with Harriet's being more "cultured" and "refined" and Mildred's being more competitive and "rough and tumble," their most heated debates were over the very heart of the matter: "What is Nancy?"

Rehak tracks Harriet and Mildred's correspondence as they exhaustively parsed Nancy from one book to the next. While Mildred loved a raging-water rescue scene involving a horse (Bess: "You saved me, Nancy"), Harriet insisted on adding a typical chaser of modesty (Nancy: "All I did was to grab hold of the bridle"). Mildred's heroines had swaggering confidence; Harriet worried that this verged on officiousness. Carped she, "Once in a while Nancy or Kay [Tracey, from another series Mildred was writing] will get beyond the bounds of respectfulness for their elders. After all, they are a bit young to order around police officials and doctors!" Mildred's girls also "declared in a low tone," "grumbled," or "commented grimly" (and Nancy's chum George Fayne veered toward the "slangy"). In Harriet's mind, the necessary ginger should be conveyed through eyes that pleasantly "twinkle" and "sparkle."

Looking back, it's easy to dis the lace-daily primness of Harriet Stratemeyer. As a cultural arbiter she had failings. Grosset & Dunlap's rewriting of the Nancy Drew collection, begun in 1958, was due partly to a racial prejudice to which Harriet was blind, folks

READING LIST

GENDER BENDING, PART 2

Women's books that men should read

BY TERRY CASTLE

Collected Poems and Selected Prose, by Charlotte Mew (1981). The melancholic Mew (1869–1928) is now mostly forgotten (she killed herself out of loneliness at fifty-eight—apparently—by ingesting creosote). Female fans have occasionally launched rescue parties, but the lit-crit blokes still don't pay much attention, though she is the opposite of a gaggy dead "poetess." Mew's poems are few, somber, and spinsterish, but in their sad, shriveled way supremely beautiful. They give voice to some part of our shared and irrevocable pain.

The Pure and the Impure, by Colette (1941). Forget the mascara, blue lampshades, and fluffy kitty cats: there is no one more tough-minded in twentieth-century European letters. (You will have to decide for yourself how to assess her actions under Vichy.) This is an anatomy of the sophisticated sexual life as lived in great cities by those who are thoughtful and unafraid. Male readers will be shocked to discover how much Colette knows about them—about the emptiness, the *tristesse*, lurking at the heart of virility.

An Autobiography (To the Is-Land, An Angel at My Table, The Envoy From Mirror City), by Janet Frame (1989). Such poignancy, farce, tragedy, and joy—one can only pay homage. Born poor and muddle-headed in New Zealand in 1924, Frame was accidentally-on-purpose incarcerated in a mental hospital in her twenties and stayed there for seven years. She somehow emerged to become a world-class novelist and the one person able to explain—with consummate kindness to everyone involved (herself included)—just how the catastrophe had



come about. Men should read her to grasp how hard and sad it often is to be a girl.

The Hotel, by Elizabeth Bowen (1927). Shockingly unknown, even among Sensitive Guy fans of Wharton, Welty, and Woolf, Bowen set her earliest novel in a vaguely Forsterish milieu: an English pensione on the Italian Riviera, filled with the requisite lady tourists, clergymen, and handsome young fellows in tennis whites. When the heroine falls in love—with a seductive older woman who wants to marry her off to her son—the comedy of manners turns abruptly into a chilling portrait of female-on-female emotional sadism. No knock on Forster, but Bowen is *heaps* better than he is.

Catherine and Other Writings, by Jane Austen (1993). Teenage genius goes on comic rampage. Austen seems to have been born with a fatuousness detector implanted in her mobcapped skull. Her collected juvenilia—plays and sketches like the droll *History of England* she wrote at sixteen—are subversive and hilarious. Pompous middle-aged men with Dick Cheney waistlines, proceed at your own risk. As long as you're reading Austen, *Persuasion's* pretty good too.

Terry Castle is a professor of English at Stanford. Her books include *The Apparitional Lesbian* and *Courage, Mon Amie*.

of color never being an easy fit for River Heights (those who did appear spoke in an uneducated dialect and were typically villains). In the politically charged 1960s the Stratemeyer Syndicate introduced a cheerful new series to America about the Tollivers, "a family of five Negro children who have fun and adventures." It died more quickly than

Dorothy Dale. (Which is not to say that Nancy was untouched by the sixties. Sample dialogue from *The Clue of the Dancing Puppet*: "You're cool customers" and "That ghostly dancer is getting me down.") Nor was Harriet a master of media relations. When the TV series *Nancy Drew* tanked in the late 1970s, its star, Pamela Sue Martin, boomeranged

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right into a *Playboy* photo spread. Horrified, Harriet drained Stratemeyer Syndicate funds to run outraged ads in *Playboy* and beyond, with little practical gain.

But the beauty of this cultural biography is Rehak's admirable insistence on giving credit where credit is due. Yes, Harriet may sometimes have been shortsighted, but she knew that Nancy's magic was in the details (sample cover comment: "My idea is to have Nancy wearing a dress with an Inca design and I am attaching some photographs from the July issue of *Vogue* magazine"—absolutely). The real Zany Shaws of Nancy Drew's first seventy-five years, Rehak suggests, were the people emotionally distant from Nancy: the faceless marketing directors of 1980s Simon & Schuster, who, upon acquiring the series, saw a Jordache jeans-clad Nancy Drew as merely a launching pad for clothing, accessories, and cosmetics. Hiss!

As Arthur Prager wrote in *Saturday Review*, while musing about why even in the psychedelic 1960s girls were still mad about the well-mannered sleuth, "Apparently there is a rock-ribbed streak of conservatism in the nine-to-eleven group ... They will participate in outlandish fads for the sake of show, but they like things simple, basic, well organized." True still today, and not just of the younger set. Think of all the women my age who've participated in outlandish fads (Jordache jeans come to mind) but who prefer the basic, well-organized simplicity—faux as it may be—of that Westport battle-ax, Martha Stewart. Nancy's essential Drewness, after all, lies in her ability to tie villains up *and* make tea sandwiches—the perfect legacy from her two very different mommies. Out of the fiery editorial marriage of rough-and-tumble Mildred and refined Harriet came a perfectly behaved, kick-ass goddess-sleuth—the Nancy Drew that girls (and grown women) have known, loved, and wanted to be for seventy-five years.

All hail Nancy Drew! ♡

Sandra Tsing Loh is a contributing editor of The Atlantic. Her commentaries appear regularly on American Public Media's Marketplace, and her solo show, Mother on Fire, is currently running at the 24th St. Theatre, in Los Angeles.



BOOKS

Triumph at Trafalgar

In his victory over the French and the Spanish, Admiral Horatio Nelson's biggest guns were the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism

BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

The first of the world wars was what the British used to call—long before “The Great War” of 1914—“the Napoleonic war.” And not even the carnage in Flanders or at the Battle of Britain has effaced its memory. As I was beginning to compose this paragraph, I learned of the death of the former British prime minister Sir Edward Heath, who devoted his political life to the fusion of the United Kingdom with the European Union. The idea was vetoed by Charles de Gaulle in the 1960s, but Heath pressed on dauntlessly and was rewarded with Britain’s accession to membership a decade later. The special seal on the new relationship was the agreement to build,

at long last, a railway tunnel underneath the channel that divides the south coast of England from the European mainland. Sir Edward once told me that when he met Georges Pompidou, De Gaulle’s successor, there was a

certain *froideur* as they discussed the plan. The Parisian terminus of the undersea line was to be the Gare du Nord. The British terminus was to be Waterloo Station. Might it be possible, Pompi-

dou inquired with extreme but feigned diffidence, to rename the British end of the line? It was for him a matter of national susceptibility. Heath’s response was to the effect that France might as well demand the rechristening of Tra-

falgar Square. This was only to restate, to a wincing Pompidou, the problem as it had presented itself in the first place.

There are in fact some earlier tunnel diggings on the French side of the Channel, begun by Napoleon Bonaparte when he realized that his plan for a global empire could be assured of success only if he could invade and subdue the British Empire at its metropolitan source. The Corsican’s many fits and starts of *grandeur* are well recorded, but this one example can stand for all the rest, because it involved a recognition that he probably could not defeat the British on their favorite element, which was water. His hopeless effort to be the mole under the seabed was perhaps a subliminal acknowledgment of this impermeable fact. His striking but weird summary of the combat with Britain—that it was a war “between an elephant and a whale”—was more a form of denial than a statement of reality. The big English whale would trounce the lesser French whale every time, which meant defeat for the pachyderm on land as well as on the high seas. The metaphor, in other words, was hopelessly mixed.

The bicentennial of the Battle of Trafalgar falls on October 21 of this year, but was commemorated early by the British in such a way as to minimize the effect on Gallic *amour-propre*. In June a mock sea battle with wooden ships was choreographed in the waters off Portsmouth rather than Spain, and the rival fleets were code-named “Red” and “Blue.” The visit by British royalty to Horatio Nelson’s old flagship HMS *Victory*, moored in Portsmouth Harbor as a floating museum, was the only reminder of the real thing. Adam Nicolson’s book restores the real thing to the foreground.

Hegel’s description of Napoleon as “history on horseback” has always had to be qualified by the shipborne nemesis who pursued him wherever he went. Did the French army muster in the shade of the pyramids to hear its leader herald the conquest of Egypt and boast of the future domination of India? Yes—but before this Orientalist project could take hold,

SEIZE THE FIRE:
HEROISM, DUTY
AND THE BATTLE
OF TRAFALGAR

by Adam Nicolson
HarperCollins

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NEW FICTION

Finds and flops

BY JOSEPH O'NEILL

If, as Cyril Connolly suggested, success is the greatest of all the enemies of literature, few talents can have been more threatened than Zadie Smith's. And indeed *White Teeth*, her triumphant debut, was followed by *The Autograph Man*, an awkward, slightly chaotic novel that gave the impression of a writer disoriented by a cacophonous critical babble and trying to regain her bearings by asking herself



ON BEAUTY

by Zadie Smith
Penguin

(as Connolly might have counseled), Would it amuse Horace or Milton or Swift or Leopardi? Could it be read to Flaubert or Dave Eggers?

On Beauty, Smith's third novel, is by contrast an assured effort—although Smith remains sufficiently self-conscious (and generous) to

expressly acknowledge the influence of E. M. Forster: "He gave me a classy old frame, which I covered with new material as best I could." This material concerns a fateful year or so in the lives of the Belseys, a family living in the liberal splendor of a Massachusetts college town. The father (white, English) is a professor, the mother (African-American) is a hospital administrator, and they have three kids, all students. They are confronted with familiar enemies of familial happiness—marital infidelity, creeping emotional isolation, coming-of-age hazards—as well as the ideological and spiritual challenges arising from the arrival in town of the Kippes, an aggressively reactionary and religious Anglo-Caribbean family.

Smith displays all her strengths: satirical energy, imaginative breadth (she's equally engaging about the inner lives of a teenage boy and a middle-aged mother), and a sure and funny touch with jumbled ethnicities. And although the full, tragic dimensions of the human adventure may be missing—an odd, sitcommy inconsequentiality colors the disasters that befall her characters—there's no doubting the artistic conviction that underlies this unabashedly conventional novel. It's hard to say what Horace or Leopardi would have made of *On Beauty*, but it might well have amused Forster, at least.

Joseph O'Neill is working on his third novel, *The Brooklyn Dream Game*.

Nelson was splintering and burning the French fleet at the mouth of the Nile, in Aboukir Bay, and Bonaparte himself was lucky to slip through the British blockade in a small and undistinguished surviving vessel. Did French ambition extend to the command of the Baltic? Only until Nelson sailed right into Copenhagen Harbor and set the ships and the dockyards ablaze. These and other actions cost Nelson one arm and one eye, and made him into the most recognizable celebrity in Britain, but he knew he could not rest until he had caught the main French fleet, with its Spanish allies, right out in the open and smashed it for good. The victories at the Nile and at Copenhagen, in 1798 and 1801, were only a rehearsal for Trafalgar, which took place within cannon's roar of the Pillars of Hercules, at the decisive junction of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

Adam Nicolson's masterly reconstruction of this event stresses one

individual's uncompromising pursuit of the end that will satisfy him will also serve the general good. What is good for one is good for all and a fleet which promotes and relies on individual zeal will be more likely to achieve a productive end than one controlled by a single deciding government or admiral.

This analogy is very sound when one considers the nature of the foe. The Spanish fleet was made up largely of ships named for saints, crewed by men little better than serfs, and commanded by nobles who mingled their piety with fatalism. Their arsenal might include the only four-decker gunship in the world, the *Santísima Trinidad*, but Sir Francis Drake had proved as far back as 1588 that such lumbering platforms of antique hierarchy could be harried to death by smaller vessels with keener crews.

As for the French, their discipline and order had been fatally compromised by the opposite mistake: the

It occurred to me while reading this book that some historian ought to have inquired by now whether perhaps Villeneuve, the French admiral at Trafalgar, actually wanted to lose.

thing above all: that it was a victory of the Protestant ethic, and to a lesser extent a victory of the spirit of capitalism. He might not wish to be described as a Weberian materialist (his last book was a beautiful account of the composition of the King James version of the Bible), but he devotes a good deal of space to the economic and religious substrata of the combat between Britain and its French and Spanish foes. Two weeks before Trafalgar, Nelson wrote a memorandum concerning strategy and circulated it to all his captains. In essence he instructed them to employ their own initiative, and strongly suggested that the most enterprising would be the most rewarded. "His captains," Nicolson writes, "were to see themselves as the entrepreneurs of battle."

The battle is founded on a clear commercial analogy. Trafalgar worked according to the basic principle enunciated by Adam Smith that the

Jacobinization of their navy. Veteran officers with hard experience had been cashiered by the revolution, and sailors were encouraged to put slogans and abstractions before obedience to orders. Again to quote Nicolson: "The anarchic and impassioned qualities which fuelled the rampaging French armies sweeping all before them in Europe, living off the land, bringing spontaneity and shock to the level of high military art: none of these things can sustain a navy which depends, in its deeper levels, on the far more rationalist, organizational virtues of steadiness of supply and practice, on orderly coherence and a sense of unquestioned mutual reliance." Nelson, in other words, could grant autonomy to his captains in the confidence that they also understood the limits. In sharp contrast, Villeneuve, the French admiral, was forbidden by Napoleon to inform his captains of what his overall strategy was.

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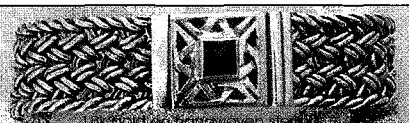
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That strategy was actually a brilliant one: to lure Nelson's fleet into thinking that a strike was being made in the West Indies, all the while rendezvousing with the Spaniards in the Atlantic and then dashing up the English Channel in sufficient strength to ferry Bonaparte's invasion force across from Boulogne. The British crossed and recrossed the Atlantic, and went almost the whole length of the Mediterranean and back, on a wild-goose chase, but the second of Villeneuve's tactics failed to come off (he did not succeed in combining all his ships under one flag in time), and he allowed himself to be bottled up with the Spanish in their major southern port of Cadiz. From then on it was certain that a confrontation between the two main fleets would occur, and that Nelson and his superb deputy Collingwood would be able to help determine the timing of it.

Nicolson's concept of the bourgeois radical, though well enough shaped to explain the prowess of Nelson's navy, will not quite do as a characterization of Nelson himself. The man was evidently consumed by ambition, highly interested in pelf and preferment, and a natural Tory who defended the slave trade and imperialism, which Adam Smith so much deplored. His period in Naples, where he put down a republican insurrection and hanged its leaders even after they had surrendered under a safe-conduct, introduced him to the luxury and vice of the Neapolitan and Sicilian courts. King Ferdinand even gave him an absurd operetta "dukedom," calling him Duke of Brontë, and Nelson, already an English peer, afterward signed his letters with the extravagant hybrid title "Nelson and Brontë." His affair with Lady Hamilton had made him even greedier. (The exoticism of this torrid interlude in southern Italy is very well caught in Susan Sontag's novel *The Volcano Lover*.) Yet what Nelson truly wanted was to be compared to King Henry V. He even suggestively misquoted the Saint Crispin's Day speech in a letter, saying of himself, "If it be a sin to covet glory, I am the most offending soul alive." (Shakespeare has Henry say

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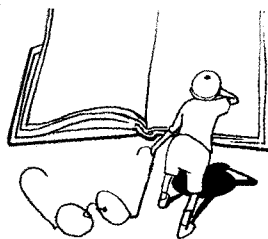
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A CLOSE READ*What makes good writing good*

BY CHRISTINA SCHWARZ



"The woman he met. He met a woman. This woman was the woman he met. She was not the woman he expected to meet or planned to meet or had carved into his head in full dress with a particular nose and eyes and lips and a very particular brain. No, this was a different woman, the one he met. When he met her he could hardly stand her because she did not fit the shape in his brain of the woman he had planned so vigorously and extensively to meet. And the non-fit was uncomfortable and made his brain hurt." —from "The Meeting," in **Willful**

Creatures: Stories, by Aimee Bender (Doubleday)

Bender plays with her prose. Throughout this story collection she arranges words in unconventional combinations, uses rhyme, chops some sentences off at a single word—"Oven." "But." "Wet"—and lets others run on, all of which have the effect of giving her writing a life of its own, seemingly unfettered by a controlling author. But these techniques also call attention to the words, emphasizing the distance between language and the ideas it's meant to convey. Bender never pretends that stories capture the real world on the page; instead she creates her own world somewhere between the familiar and the absurd. The first sentence here, for instance, seems to turn inside out and back again in the two that follow, so that together they skirt the edge of nonsense. These lines express the unreasonable tenaciousness of "the woman"; at the

same time, like a nursery rhyme, they're just plain fun to read. A charming lack of sophistication characterizes the whole passage. "Could hardly stand her" and "made his brain hurt" are phrases a child might use. Of the seven sentences four employ "was," which in most cases would be a deadly degree of inactivity but here works as another bit of ingenuousness. Most effective in producing this tone is the repetition of "met" and "meet," a steady beat that makes the passage read like a piece of light poetry. The subjects in this surreal story collection include potato children, a man tiny enough to use a bottle cap as a tray, a boy with fingers shaped like keys, and one with an iron for a head (born to parents with pumpkin heads). Prose so animated it seems almost capable of writing itself is only fitting.

Christina Schwarz is the author of the novels Drowning Ruth and All Is Vanity.

"honor," not "glory.") He referred to his captains as his "Band of Brothers." And of course, like Henry, he sentimentalized the rougher elements of the lower deck, offering them a share in nobility as they fought for England.

In fact, it is Admiral Villeneuve who seems to me to merit one of King Hal's finer lines—this time his defiant reply to the French herald before Agincourt: "We would not seek a battle, as we are; Nor, as we are, we say we will not shun it." He knew that the morale of his fleet, and the condition of his Spanish allies, made it nearly impossible to match the toughened and disciplined English naval forces. That was why he had sought to send the English sailing off in the wrong direction. Once he came out of Cadiz he was, so to say, sunk. It occurred to me while reading Nicolson,

as it has struck me when scanning other accounts of this extraordinary battle, that some historian ought to have inquired by now whether perhaps Villeneuve wanted to lose. His contempt for Napoleon's bombast was evident, and he had been living under the threat of arrest for cowardice. Finally, he took his vulnerable navy to sea in one great herd, and allowed it to be penetrated by two parallel British lines coming straight at him. He lost eighteen ships: one to explosion and seventeen to surrender. The British lost none, which made this one of the most decisive victories in history. But they did lose their hero.

The enduring romance of sea warfare, as depicted by C. S. Forester and Patrick O'Brian, must have something to do with the inherent democracy and solidarity of a ship's crew. Perhaps more

solidarity than democracy: all are literally in the same boat and sharing the same fate, but an adamant command structure is necessary to keep the ship fighting and afloat. And unlike army units, ships cannot be commanded from bases in the rear. In the British fleet the commander was expected to be in full view on the quarterdeck throughout the whole of an engagement. "The more significant the man at Trafalgar, the more vulnerable he was," as Nicolson phrases it. Nelson typically intensified the bravura style of this by insisting on wearing stars and medals and decorations, flamboyantly sewn to his uniform in the best Ruritanian style. Whether or not he sought martyrdom is an open question, but at all events he did not shun it. The devotional oil paintings of his final hours, lying belowdecks at last with a shattered spine and in the arms of his companions, all consciously evoke the deposition of the Savior's body from the cross. Nelson has been an emblem for the salvation of Britain ever since.

Nicolson's effort to provide an English social context is occasionally rather hit-or-miss. We learn that this was an age of heavy drinking and theaters and boxing matches, and that "in Charlotte Street in London there was a brothel staffed by flagellants." It's difficult to think of any recent age in which these statements—especially the last one—would not hold true. Nicolson is much more successful in his attempt to connect the great contest at sea with the contemporary rhythms of English writing, especially of Romantic poetry. His title is taken from Blake's "The Tyger"—"On what wings dare he aspire? / What the hand dare seize the fire?"—which was composed only a decade or so before Trafalgar. He shows us Samuel Taylor Coleridge acting as secretary to Sir Alexander Ball, the British naval commander on the island of Malta. This old sea dog once anticipated Hemingway by telling Coleridge that "courage is the natural product of familiarity with danger." Byron himself referred to Nelson as "Britannia's God of War." Nicolson doesn't mention it, but a man named Patrick Bruntë changed his name to Brontë at

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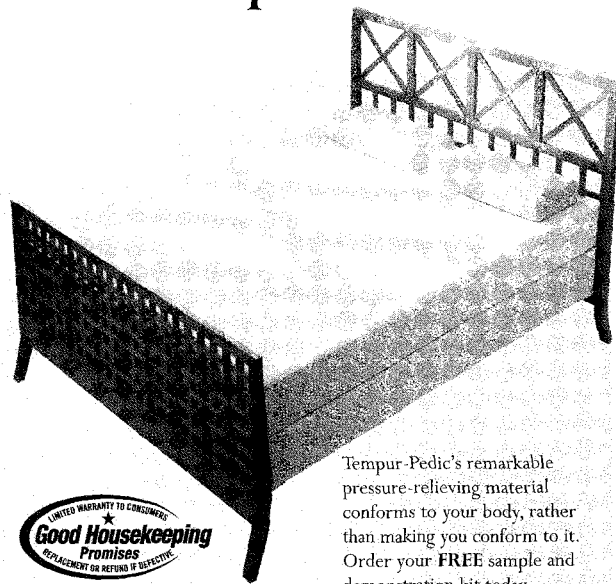
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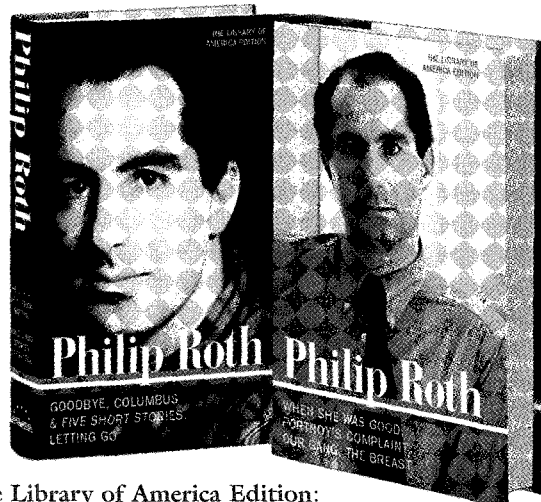
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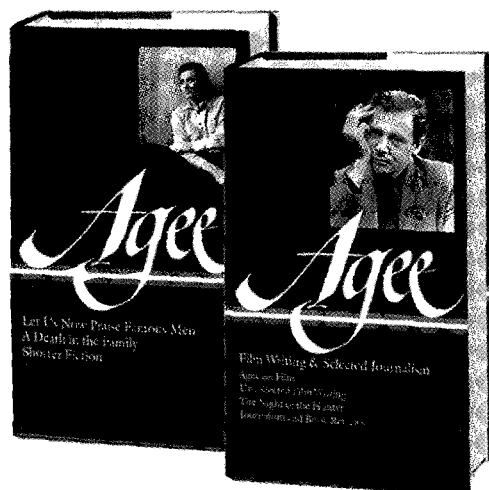
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about this time, thus sparing his literary daughters at Haworth Rectory the later disadvantage of bearing an unromantic name. One of Nelson's favorite young officers was Captain Francis Austen, Jane's younger brother, who—like Nelson and the Brontë girls—was the child of a vicarage. Perhaps most surprising is to find the gentle, reflective William Wordsworth in the course of shedding his romantic illusions about the French Revolution:

I cannot at this moment read a tale
Of two brave Vessels matched in
deadly fight
And fighting to the death, but I am
pleased
More than a wise man ought to be;
I wish,
I burn, I struggle, and in soul am
there.

He would not in fact have relished the sort of scene that Nicolson describes, of the effect of a full discharge of cannon into the unprotected stern of a ship, "raking" its innards and leaving its crew in heaps of steaming viscera. Or of the "grappling" of two vessels so that one of them, and its sailors, must die in the embrace. (It's annoying in this context that the normally meticulous Nicolson repeatedly misuses the term "brutalize," only once getting it right.) I remember touring HMS *Victory* as a boy, and seeing how the walls of the surgeon's quarters were painted red in advance, to conceal the gouts of blood that would be splashed over them. Seeing, too, the place where they warmed the surgeon's knives to avoid the horror of being incised with cold steel. Byron's scornful advice to the Lakeland dreamers—that they should "change their lakes for ocean"—was, fortunately for Wordsworth, not taken up. Within ten years of Trafalgar, Napoleon Bonaparte was on board one of Nelson's old ships, HMS *Bellerophon*, en route to his final home, on the island of St. Helena. He is supposed to have said, as he watched the immaculate drill with which the crew manned and steered the ship, that now at last he understood the force that had brought his grand imperial design to ruin. ▀

Christopher Hitchens is a contributing editor of *The Atlantic* and a columnist for *Vanity Fair*.

Latex Conquers All

A revised compendium of the curses and clichés that beset modern feminism

BY CRISTINA NEHRING

For all its comically bad prose and cloying eulogies to female anatomy, *Our Bodies, Ourselves* was in its day a solution to women's problems. In our own day it is the problem. First published in 1970, in a cheap offset edition by twelve Boston friends who sought to free their sex from dependence on doctors and husbands, it became an icon of the age. Now published by Simon & Schuster and 600 pages longer, this women's health classic has become a compendium of the curses and clichés that beset modern feminism—curses and clichés that feminism must discard or else render itself obsolete.

Take the attack on beauty with which the new edition opens. Couched as it is in the analysis of magazine ads, it will strike anyone who has visited a typical freshman composition course as darkly familiar. "Look at this Calvin Klein ad of a woman in a classic submissive pose," we read in *Our Bodies, Ourselves*: "Her fingers cover her mouth, another sign of submission ... Her eye make-up is so dark and heavy that her eyes seem bruised ..." She is simply "an object to be used," a creature for the "male gaze." As, indeed, is any woman who looks attractive or dresses agreeably; after all, according to the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, "the main reason that women try to 'improve our appearance' is to attract and win the approval of men."

This is the opposite of what Judy Norsigian, the collective's executive director, implied at a workshop last May. In a discussion of cosmetic surgery she lingered over the tale of a young man who'd begged her for advice on how to dissuade his girlfriend from buying breast implants. Far from seeking silicone to appeal to her man's sense of beauty, the young woman was defying him in order to appeal to her own—and to that of her sorority sisters, she

told him. Right or wrong, this is what women do regularly. That women's interest in their appearance lies largely in wanting to please men is a myth, and one that should be retired without further ceremony. In the same way that women decorate a dorm or a dining room, they decorate themselves. As the painter Friedensreich Hundertwasser contended, any artist's first canvas is himself—or herself. We have, he claimed, "three skins: ... our natural skin, our wardrobe, and our house." And if we have any aesthetic instinct at all, we attend to each one. To argue, like the authors of the book, that "men look (active), and women receive their gaze (passive)" is to mistake the female sex.

OUR BODIES,
OURSELVES
edited by the Boston
Women's Health
Book Collective
Simon & Schuster



The majority of men take little notice of their girlfriends' finer aesthetic improvements—the fresh manicure, the dropped dress size, the new halter top. Women notice more than men do, and they often appreciate the same things that men do.

I would wager that most women, if they were honest, would say they like the Calvin Klein model in *Our Bodies*. She looks vulnerable, to be sure—but we cherish vulnerability in our fellow creatures. What is more affecting than a picture of a sensitive cowboy or a doe-eyed street kid; what sells calendars faster than a forlorn kitten?

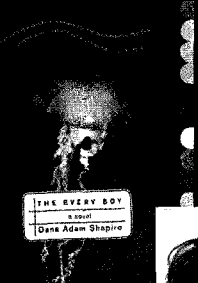
It is not freedom from beauty that needs defending but freedom for beauty. How often we hear academics say of a female colleague behind her back, "How can she expect to be taken seriously if she dresses like that?" In feminist circles "pretty" is a term of insult. It is as though one had to choose beauty or truth, style or substance.

Which brings us to another myth propagated by *Our Bodies, Ourselves*: female solidarity. In many cases women have more to fear from other women than from men. This is a truth strenuously resisted by feminists who pretend that all women are compassionate, supportive, and united against men. It is a truth resisted by the surpassingly hokey and misleading use of the word

"us" throughout *Our Bodies*, as in "Some of us may not have our full clitoris intact due to clitoridectomy." If we thank the book's "tone and voice editor" (one Zobeida Bonilla) for such anomalies of speech, we also thank its ideologues for assumptions like the one that women

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make friendlier doctors than men—or more generous lovers. Such sentimentalization is really a form of infantilization—akin to caricaturing indigenous people as "noble savages" or destitute people as "the virtuous poor." We frequently attribute greater goodness to people we consider less complex or sophisticated than the norm. It's how we compensate them for our essential condescension.

Not that our Boston authors do any of this deliberately, of course. Indeed, they don't seem to realize, for example, that by overdramatizing petty problems involving "sensitivity" they trivialize far greater problems. An alien reading *Our Bodies* would conclude that exclusion from a restroom because of one's "transgender" identity is a far greater tragedy than, say, dying because America is the only industrialized country without universal health care—or than suffering from an affliction such as quadriplegia or bladder cancer. "I have been surprised," declares a woman who must wear a bag of urine attached to her abdomen, "at how little most men I have sex with are bothered by my urostomy." "It is fun," says a quadriplegic young woman, "to be part of an education process aimed at challenging [the] perception" that being a quadriplegic in any way constrains one's "ability to enjoy and participate in sex." If the severely ill or injured make light of their troubles in these pages, the same cannot be said for the mildly marginalized. "Everybody talks about surgery," complains a man who had an operation to become a gay woman, but "no one talks about the mental difficulties faced ... after ... the transition ... Like being banned from places like the Mountain Moving Coffeehouse in Chicago." It is in the wake of this particularly stirring testimonial that the editors issue their call to arms: "Those of us who are heterosexual," they intone, must "use their privileged status to challenge" such forms of sexual intolerance.

The editors' "charity afar," to adapt Emerson, "is spite at home." That is, the exaggerated sympathy they try to solicit for minor and often self-induced troubles—from the trials of overeaters (who are encouraged to "take pride in being fat") to the tribulations of persons who

FOR THE FIRST TIME, PERHAPS, A TENABLE HISTORY OF JESUS

It won't be found in the Bible. Critical examination of the New Testament Gospels reveals sloppy history, perhaps deliberately deceptive, giving a picture of Jesus more imaginative than factual. Most Christians seem not to notice or care—transcendentalism spins its own reality. But true realists, for whom historical accuracy matters, may be pleased with what the recently discovered *Gospel of Thomas* provides: 113 notes taken down by Thomas of perplexing things Jesus said. Such notes were probably made at the times they were heard and have not suffered alteration—the best kind of source for a history.

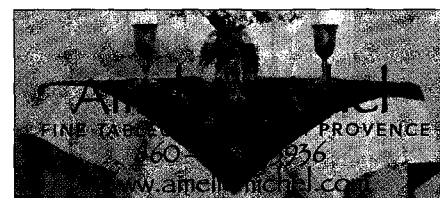
Jack Hannah in *You Will Not Taste Death: Jesus and Epicureanism* recognizes the notes as chronologically ordered and correlative with the skeletal history used in the *Gospel of Mark*. Hannah provides all the text of *Thomas* and all Marcan context, and upon this develops a narrative about Jesus that is tenably historical.

This *historical* Jesus based his teaching on the Epicurean philosophy; e.g. in place of Judaism's practices of fasting, praying, almsgiving, and obeying food laws, this *historical* Jesus said, "Tell no lie and do not do what you hate."

This *historical* Jesus never mentioned devil, demons, or hell. And the most radical influence of Epicureanism on Jesus' thought was that God and Caesar are man-made authorities and that one's ultimate authority should be oneself.

Hannah's book is 321 pgs., pbk., \$12 postpaid.

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would, if they could, exercise the “right” to determine their gender—comes at the expense of attention to larger afflictions. In the real world we must choose our causes. If we are perennially petitioning for entrance to the Mountain Moving Coffeehouse, we have less time to petition for fair access to health care. That is a shame. It may even be a crime.

The world we encounter in *Our Bodies* is so strongly politicized as to be nearly fabricated, and therefore worthless. Except, of course, when it is worse than worthless, as is the case when the authors plunge into disquisitions about sex. There are, to be sure, useful factoids about birth control and women’s anatomy. But such factoids are easy to come by in our day, and they could be contained in a few pages. The Boston Women’s Health Book Collective gives us a few *hundred* pages, most of which are far more repellent than enlightening.

If George W. Bush wanted to start a wave of abstinence in America (and he

out the powder, cut off the four fingers, and slit it up the side, leaving the thumb intact. Try lubricating the side that touches your partner. Be sure to keep the same side against her vulva, and keep track of which side is which so you don’t touch the body fluids you are trying to avoid.

All this sounds like a macabre combination of high-level surgery and elementary art class. Little could be less appealing—and less romantic. Here we have two people presumably trying to get close, and to do so they don the equivalent of a trench coat, gas mask, and full combat gear. Is this, one might legitimately ask, love, or is it war?

“Sexual intercourse,” wrote the late and radical feminist Andrea Dworkin, “is not intrinsically banal, though pop-culture magazines ... would suggest that it is. It is intense ... the internal landscape is violent upheaval ... the skin collapses as a boundary ... there is physical immersion in each other but with

The advice on sex is more repellent than enlightening. If George W. Bush wanted to start a wave of abstinence, he couldn’t do better than to place this book in hotel rooms across the country.

does), he couldn’t do better than to place a copy of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* in hotel rooms across the country. Between the book’s chirpy-cheery trivialization of sex (diagrams of genitalia with arrows that say “Find Your Orgasm Here!”) and its fanatical medicalization (long lists of plastic products we are intended to reach for at the smallest caress), there is little room for passion. Add to this the editors’ assumption that everyone wants to have sex all the time, and the whole enterprise starts to sound tragicomic. Witness the following passage about “oral sex on a woman.” It “carries some risk,” we are told, “especially if the woman has her period or [a sexually transmitted illness] with open sores.” Tempting?

For maximum protection, cover your partner’s vulva and anus with a dental dam, a cut-open latex glove, a non-lubricated condom, or non-microwaveable plastic wrap ... To turn a latex glove into a barrier, wash

no experience of ‘each other’ as separate entities.” Dworkin may be among the most unlikely defenders of intercourse—which she wrote a book to condemn—but there is something deeply right about her description of sexual union. It is by definition violent, disorienting, compromising, and intimate. Sex and death, eros and thanatos, are linked. To G-rate sex is to destroy it.

And this is exactly what feel-good feminists like the members of the Boston Collective do. They talk of “fun” and “safety,” and they sink us in banality and boredom. Provocative truths, such as the braidedness of man and woman and of love and sacrifice, are replaced by dull lies, such as female solidarity and “safe sex.” *Our Bodies, Ourselves* is a comforting book—even a soporific one. But it represents the end of honest inquiry and the end of curiosity. It represents the death of passion. ■

Cristina Nehring is at work on Women in Love: A Feminist Defense of Romance.

BEST SELLERS ABROAD

ISRAEL

Top ten works of nonfiction as of July 2005, compiled by the daily newspaper Ha’aretz.

1. Raise Not Thy Hand Against the Child, by Rabbi Israel Meir Lau. Israel’s former chief rabbi, who as a child survived Buchenwald, tells his personal story of struggle, hope, and redemption.

2. Boomerang: The Failure of Leadership in the Second Intifada, by Raviv Drucker and Ofer Shelah. How incompetence and corruption, not vision and courage, led to Ariel Sharon’s decision to withdraw from the Gaza Strip.

3. German Requiem, by Amos Elon. How the Jews of Germany went from being peddlers and tradesmen to purveyors of art, literature, scholarship, business, philosophy, and activism—before losing it all in the Holocaust. (Published in English recently as *The Pity of It All*.)

4. 1967, by Tom Segev. A controversial new account of Israeli passions, fashions, illusions, and dreams in the period leading up to and including the Six-Day War.

5. Stalin, by Edvard Radzinsky. A biography of the Soviet tyrant, by an author with special access to Russia’s secret archives.

6. Standing in Line, by Yair Lapid. Israel’s most colorful columnist spouts off on popular culture, restaurants, and the future of manliness.

7. What Is Love? by Yoram Yovel. Eight couples looking for love, as seen through the eyes of their psychoanalyst.

8. The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller, by Carlo Ginzburg. How a common man in early-modern Italy lived, worked, and endured the extraordinary trials of the Inquisition.

9. Rationality, Fairness, Happiness: Selected Writings, by Daniel Kahneman and Colleagues. A Nobel Prize winner in economics shows how passion and whimsy affect economic choices.

10. A Land Divided: Israeli Reflections on Disengagement, by Ari Shavit. Thirty-three conversations with the country’s leading political and intellectual figures, by Israel’s most celebrated interviewer.

—DAVID HAZONY

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TRAVELS

The Old Man and the Daiquiri

A pilgrimage through Hemingway's Havana

BY WAYNE CURTIS

Ernest Hemingway's house just outside Havana is called Finca Vigía. You aren't allowed inside. It's in parlous condition, and it's filled with small, pilferable items, such as unopened letters and a rubber stamp that reads "I never answer letters, Ernest Hemingway." You are, however, permitted to stroll around the outside and crane your neck through open windows and doors, from which you can see the interior much as the author left it in 1960. If you crane too far, a security guard will approach and give you a sharp look. You can smooth things over by discreetly slipping her a couple of dollars, in return for which she will walk your camera through the house and take pictures of hard-to-see items. Most visitors want a photograph of the Picasso drawing of a bull, which hangs on a bedroom wall. I directed the guard to Hemingway's tabletop bar in the living room, for a close-up of sun-faded liquor bottles.

I was in Havana researching a book about the history of rum, and at Finca Vigía I found myself amid a reverent crowd. Beginning in 1932, Hemingway lived in Cuba off and on for nearly three decades and through three wives, and devout tourists, mostly European and Canadian, trek like pilgrims along the Stations of the Papa, making obeisance where the great man lived, worked, and, mostly, drank.

The digital photograph the guard



El Floridita, Hemingway's favorite spot for one of his favorite drinks

returned to me confirmed that Hemingway's tastes in liquor were catholic. The bar was stocked with Campari and Gordon's gin, among other libations. (Hemingway was also fond of tequila. On his fishing boat, now housed in an open shed behind the house, he had a small bar built atop the bridge to avoid the inconvenience of having to descend a ladder between drinks. He called tequila "the steering liquor.")

His home bar also held a bottle of Bacardi rum. Hemingway liked Cuban rum in general and frozen daiquiris—which provoked him into a small rhapsody—in particular: "This frozen daiquiri," he wrote in *Islands in the Stream*, "so well beaten as it is, looks like the sea where the wave falls away from the bow of a ship when she is doing thirty knots."

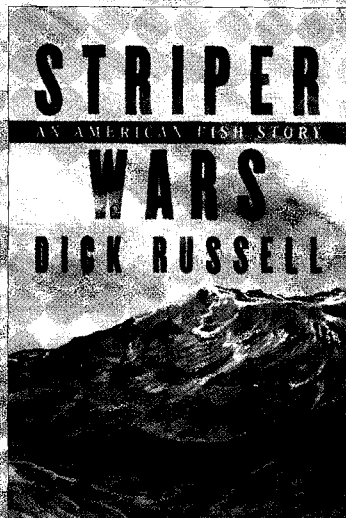
The daiquiri as we know it is a sort of alcoholic sherbet, often extruded from vast, Dairy Queen-like dispensers. It is associated with sundresses and strawberries, linked more to ice-cream headaches than hangovers. One wonders: How did the manliest of bare-fisted fighting men fall in with such a beverage?

Seeking the answer to a simple question can give a pilgrim great stamina. So it was with my quest.

I began my stay in Havana as Hemingway did, in a room on the fifth floor of the Ambos Mundos Hotel, a flamingo-colored pile in the heart of the old city. Hemingway's early stays in Havana allowed him to escape outbreaks of guests at his Key West home, which made it impossible to get any writing

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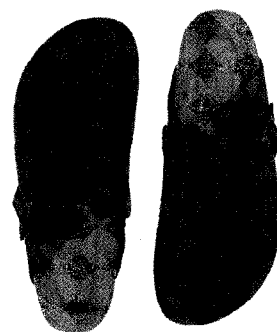
done. His favored hotel room, where he was a frequent visitor until he moved into his house, in 1939, is now a shrine, with a red rope in front of the bed to keep tourists from stealing the bedclothes, and his typewriter housed in a Plexiglas reliquary. Hemingway would write or review drafts from about 8:00 A.M. until 2:00 P.M., and spend the rest of the day watching jai alai or cock-fights, or drinking in Havana's bars.

Bars catering to Americans were abundant. Hemingway had arrived on the island during the waning days of the Volstead Act, the law that ushered in Prohibition and in effect served as an economic-development program for Cuba's rum and saloon industries. Ferries and cruise lines brought thirsty Americans to Cuba throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, and aviation technology was marshaled to meet demand. The first scheduled international flight from the United States took off just ten months after Prohibition began, connecting Key West and Havana by means of an eleven-seat sea plane.

Old Havana is a sort of museum of forgotten drinks. Well-groomed waiters wearing short-waisted jackets take orders at outdoor cafés for cocktails such as El Presidente and the Mary Pickford, the latter a fine blend of rum, pineapple juice, maraschino, and grenadine. Those who have recently been introduced to the mojito may be surprised to learn that it's not new; it has been popular in Cuba for decades.

Hemingway was also partial to mojitos, and evidence of this is on display at La Bodeguita del Medio, a small, often raucous bar on a narrow side street. Called the Pleasant Storage Room when it opened, in 1942, it morphed from a shop selling dried beans into a hipster hangout. If Cubans had ever been inclined to sport foam trucker hats and soul patches, this is where you would have found them. The bar attracted celebrities such as Pablo Neruda and Errol Flynn, and a photo on the wall shows a not very iconic Che Guevara sitting in a booth. A framed epigram handwritten by Hemingway hangs behind the bar, like a coat of arms in a British pub: "My mojito in La Bodeguita, My daiquiri in El Floridita."

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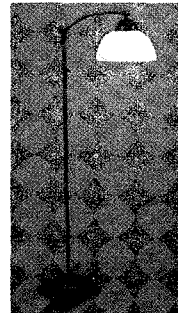
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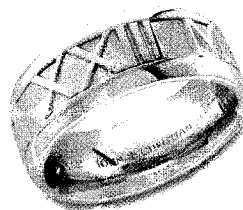
El Floridita is near Havana's central park. It features a long bar that curves around to a cul-de-sac. This is where Hemingway liked to position himself, and where he put Thomas Hudson in *Islands in the Stream*: "He took his seat on a tall bar stool at the extreme left of the bar. His back was against the wall toward the street and his left was covered by the wall behind the bar." Hemingway was said to have consumed sixteen double daiquiris here at one sitting.

El Floridita claims to be the "cradle of the daiquiri." For years it was run by the bar artist Constantino Ribalaigua Vert, and the daiquiri was his David. A form of the drink—a concoction of rum, lime juice, sugar, and ice—had been around since the late nineteenth century, but Constantino perfected it. He made it in a cocktail shaker with mechanically chipped ice, creating an ideally balanced drink—at once sweet and tart, its smooth texture complicated by small ice crystals that melted the moment they touched the lips. "The drink is shaken by throwing it from one shaker and catching it in another, the liquid forming a half-circle in the air," Basil Woon wrote in *When It's Cocktail Time in Cuba* (1928). "It's worth a visit to Havana merely to watch Constantino operate."

The daiquiri's transformation from a classic shaker cocktail ordered by grizzled men to a Slurpee favored by society girls began with the invention of the electric blender. Shortly after its introduction at a 1937 restaurant show in Chicago, the Waring blender (financially backed by the bandleader Fred Waring, of Fred Waring and the Pennsylvanians) revolutionized bar drinks. As early as 1939 the cocktail writer Charles Baker was referring to the "new style" of blender daiquiri. ("We do not even know Mr. Waring, but we like his music and his Blender," Baker wrote.) Soon egg whites were added to make daiquiris even smoother and frothier; they could be served in an ice-cream cone. A great many fruits were then incorporated. The daiquiri became a dessert that got you drunk.

I believe that Hemingway would not have approved of a sherbet daiquiri. He liked his daiquiris made with two

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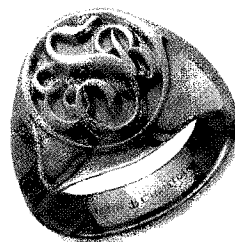
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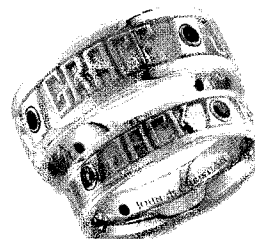
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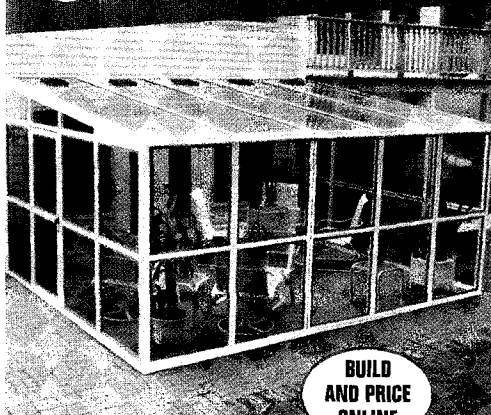
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shots of rum, lime juice, ice, and no sugar. Constantino devised special daiquiris for him, including one with a touch of grapefruit juice and some drops of maraschino liqueur. You can still order these custom versions at El Floridita. The daiquiris there are now prepared in a blender—disappointing, but the only way the bar can keep up with demand, since tour buses pull up every half hour or so to discharge their clamorous cruise-ship cargo in search of Papa's haunts.

Hemingway's barstool in the cul-de-sac had long been chained off to honor the author's memory. Then, a few years ago, a hulking, life-size bronze statue of the writer was installed. It is every bit as creepy as a Seward Johnson sculpture, and a bronze book and a ceremonial daiquiri even sit on the bar in front of it.

With my paperback of *Islands in the Stream*, I settled in one afternoon two stools down from Hemingway. As it turned out, he made for a disagreeable drinking companion. An endless parade of tourists lined up to have their photos taken leaning on him, toasting the lens with their daiquiris, while their companions elbowed me in the back as they angled their cameras.

Still, tipping at El Floridita pleased me. The daiquiri, blended though it was, had a cool, alabaster, ship-at-thirty-knots translucence and a welcome tartness. I was further pleased to find that it actually melted as I drank it; I have always been mystified by the Styrofoam-like mass of flavorless ice that I end up with after drinking one of the industrial daiquiris of strip-mall America.

"He had drunk double frozen daiquiris," I read as I sipped. They were the kind that made Thomas Hudson feel "the way downhill glacier skiing feels running through powder snow and, after the sixth and eighth ... like downhill glacier skiing when you are running unroped."

I have never been downhill glacier skiing, roped or unroped. But I was starting to understand how Thomas Hudson felt. ▀

Wayne Curtis is the author of *And a Bottle of Rum: A History of the New World in 10 Cocktails*, to be published next year.

ANSWERS TO THE SEPTEMBER PUZZLER

M	L	E	T	R	I	P	O	R	T	I	N	G
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"Lost and Found"

The unclued diagonal entry is METAL DETECTOR. "Lost" items are the symbols for various metals, and "found" items are the names of those metals. Across. 1. MA(i)L + LET 3. RIP + SNOR(T)ING 10. UP(BEA[k])T (put anag.) 11. FAULKNER (anag.) 13. IDEA (hidden) 14. TO + SS 15. W(E)ARY 17. CON(T)E 18. ANTI + GUA (Aug rev.) 19. D(I) + D 21. LOOM (double def.) 22. B + LEEP (peel rev.) 24. EVIL (rev.) 27. PR + ONE 28. B(L)AN + C 31. S + A + RUM 33. R + ANCOR (acorn anag.) 35. SEPTUPLETS (anag.) 36. CROWE (homophone) 37. EN(D)RESULT (ten rules anag.) 38. CON(i)FER Down. 2. EATEN (homophone) 3. RUN(t) 4. P(ASS)E 5. O(UTS)IDE (suit anag.) 6. CUR + LEW 7. IN + CANS 8. (u)NEARHING 9. GR + OZ + NY 12. NEOTERIC (anag.) 16. S(NOW + LAD)EN 20. SLEAZIER (anag.) 23. LA + UNDRIES 25. MAR + A(U)D 26. TUN + A 29. B(ANT)U 30. INT(R)O 31. SASE (anag.) 32. MULE (double def.) 34. TOT (double def.)

Sweet Home Louisiana

*Sampling artisanal rum from New Orleans
—and one of the city's signature desserts*

BY CORBY KUMMER

In summer the fields around New Iberia and St. Martinville, Louisiana, are waist high with rows of frond-covered stalks that to a northerner look like sloppy corn or short bamboo. Anyone from the Gulf Coast knows they are fields of sugarcane. Not many are left. An industry that brought great riches to the South—and great suffering to the slaves who were literally sold down the river from tobacco plantations to work the cane fields and the sugar mills—is now something of an endangered curio.

The Southern Foodways Alliance, this country's most intellectually engaged (and probably most engaging) food society, is devoting the year to the history of sugar in the South. (Last year's theme was food and civil rights, with a field trip to Birmingham followed by a conference in Oxford, Mississippi, where the SFA is based at the University of Mississippi.) Although some southern farmers still grow sugarcane for their own use, only Hawaii, Florida, Texas, and Louisiana produce it commercially. Its future in Louisiana, where it is still one of the most economically significant agricultural products, has come under repeated threat, first from sugar beets and then from corn (government subsidies make corn syrup by far the cheapest commercial sweetener); the recent passage of the Central American Free Trade Agreement could be its death knell.

In July I joined an SFA field trip to Cajun country, two hours west of New Orleans. The trip began with a taste of one of the few remaining products from Louisiana cane sugar: Steen's cane syrup (www.steensyrup.com), which anyone outside Louisiana would look at and call molasses. We tasted it on French bread at LeJeune's Bakery, in Jeanerette, a sugar town whose cane-crushing mill recently closed—a com-

mon story in these parts. LeJeune's, a long brick building from the late 1800s, claims to be one of the oldest surviving bakeries in Louisiana; much of its equipment and many of its recipes are original. Like molasses, the thick syrup that remains after cane juice is boiled to extract sugar, Steen's is an acquired taste, deep and slightly sulfurous, though it is milder and sweeter than molasses. (It tastes nothing like corn syrup, which is gummy and flavorless

by comparison.) Some southern farm families still make cane syrup to use in place of granulated sugar, as families in New England still make maple syrup. The first sensation is a piercing sweetness, followed by a lightly bitter backlash. Like most things deep-flavored, complex, and both sweet and bitter (dark chocolate, espresso with sugar), cane syrup, once the taste is acquired, can become addictive.

So can the taste of the best-known product of molasses: rum. Having assumed that all good rum came from the original sugar-producing islands of the Caribbean, I was surprised to find some being distilled in New Orleans, from locally produced molasses. Along with Steen's cane syrup, rum from Celebration Distillation is one of the only guaranteed ways to taste Louisiana sugar.



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The sugar industry was, of course, built on the backs of slaves. Louisiana was one of the two richest states per capita in the 1850s, its cane planters having overcome various obstacles to enjoy what the food historian Jessica Harris, speaking on the SFA field trip about the high-living eighteenth-century sugar barons of Barbados and Jamaica, called "stupid money."

The genteel beauty and underlying cruelty of plantation life are still apparent at the Levert-St. John plantation, near St. Martinville, with its grandiose columned "big house" and one of the thirteen remaining sugar mills in the state, a building bristling with old-fashioned-looking pipes and tanks and hoppers. The mills, where cane is crushed as quickly as possible to obtain the maximum amount of sucrose (growers are paid according to sucrose content, and the sucrose quickly deteriorates after the cane is cut), are still hot, reeking, dangerous places. Harris told the SFA group that lost fingers or even arms and legs were usually a sign that slaves had worked in a sugar mill. (*Bittersweet*, by Peter Macinnis, is one of several histories of sugar that follow in the footsteps of the anthropologist Sidney Mintz's masterly *Sweetness and Power*.)

Cane stalks are crushed to extract the juice, which is clarified, boiled, evaporated, and precipitated into big sand-colored crystals of raw sugar. Mountains of raw sugar are trucked from the mills to refineries to be melted, refined, and granulated. At Levert-St. John we persuaded our guide to let us taste "impure" raw sugar, which was full-flavored and good—though a bit disappointing compared with the irresistible muscovado, pillon, and other dark-brown sugars from the Caribbean and Central America, which include more molasses. (Commercial brown sugar is just white sugar given a brief molasses rinse.) The by-products hardly go to waste. Bagasse, the fiber left after the stalks are pressed, is burned to power the mills. Molasses goes into nutritious and iron-rich animal feed—and once its remaining sugars are broken down and fermented, it is the base for rum.

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In Colonial times rum was distilled in the Northeast—the Triangle Trade meant that molasses arrived in distilling centers like Boston and Newport on ships that had carried slaves to the West Indies, and left for Africa as rum. Rum helped both to spur the Revolution, because of the British tax on molasses, and to warm its soldiers and commanders. Rum was also, of course, distilled on the islands where sugarcane grew; Barbados and Jamaica, its original strongholds, remain famous for it. It was not, however, distilled in the South. By the time the sugar industry was enjoying its brief period of might in Louisiana (it never achieved anything like its antebellum prominence in the Reconstruction South), rum was falling out of favor. Whiskey, which Scotch-Irish immigrants could make from locally grown grain away from big ports, became the most popular American liquor. And rum was asso-

and an artist's eye shows in the renovation and the handsome, simple labels.

The distillery makes both light and dark rums, using molasses from Edgard, in southeastern Louisiana. I tasted molasses out of a plastic hose as Jon Blair, the day's distiller, an ambitious young Tulane graduate, began making a batch. The room smelled powerfully of the slightly medicinal and sulfurous molasses, which tasted much rougher than Steen's cane syrup but was not unpleasant. Blair mixed to a milky foam water and dry yeast that had been isolated, he told me, from Louisiana cane sugar. He climbed up a tank to pour the foam into the molasses; the mixture would ferment for a few days before being distilled in a very rustic still that looked like a sideways water heater. Then it would be filtered and bottled for light rum, or put into old charred-oak barrels, bought from Jack Daniel's, to be aged for dark.

Having assumed that all good rum came from the original sugar-producing islands of the Caribbean, I was surprised to find some being distilled in New Orleans, from locally produced molasses.

ciated with slavery. During Prohibition rumrunners smuggled it in on ships from the West Indies, but the quality was low and did little to improve rum's reputation. Prohibition escapees to Cuba and a vogue for Latin music and exotic cocktails brought rum back into favor and even made it glamorous (see "The Old Man and the Daiquiri," by Wayne Curtis, page 131). A buildup of the Puerto Rican rum industry, in the 1950s, made rum and Coke the standard teenagers' starter drink.

Celebration Distillation, in the Gentilly section of New Orleans, occupies an old brick warehouse with a romantic address: off Elysian Fields, near the corner of Frenchmen and Abundance. The whole operation—tasting room in the front, exposed-brick back room with damply aromatic barrels resting on open wooden scaffolding, as if in library stacks—has a pleasantly homey and easygoing atmosphere; the owner, James Michalopoulos, is a painter,

Dark rum, the kind that the original sugarcane islands are still famous for, is usually more expensive. White rum—which Bacardi and others made popular for mixing into drinks such as daiquiris (rum, lime juice, and sugar; named for a beach town near Santiago, Cuba), mai tais (rum, curaçao, lime juice, sugar syrup, and orgeat), and of course rum and Coke—is generally considered of lower rank. But Celebration's white rum, called simply Cane, is worth sipping on its own. It's by far the best of the company's rums, with strong and very pleasant vanilla flavors in both the nose and the aftertaste, and a distinct note of molasses in the aftertaste. I wanted to sip Cane over ice; or mix it with Abita root beer, a local soda sweetened with cane sugar, and part of a national artisan-pop trend; or use it in bananas Foster (see accompanying recipe).

For a rum that has been in release only two years (the company sold its first rum in 1999), Cane is impressive,

FIVE RUMS WORTH DRINKING

Cane, from Celebration Distillation, is a white rum that starts harsh but ends with notes of toffee and vanilla, and the vanilla gets stronger as the taste lingers. Good on its own and very good for mixing either with cola (many southerners favor RC) or New Orleans-made Abita root beer.

Barbancourt white, from Haiti, is stingingly alcoholic (it is bottled at 86 proof, whereas most rums are bottled at 80 proof) and requires mixing, with almost any kind of flavored soda. Its most noteworthy feature is its strong molasses nose, a reminder of rum's origins.

Mount Gay Eclipse, from Barbados, is a light straw color and has a mild caramel flavor—appropriate, because dark rum gets its color more often from the addition of caramel syrup than from the char of oak barrels. Of the easily available aged rums this is the most agreeable and balanced, with a pleasant butter-scotch aftertaste that doesn't linger.

Appleton Special Jamaica rum is also a light straw color, and has a lovely, delicate nose. The flavor is delicate too, with subtle oak overtones and hints of toffee. The trade would call this "feminine"; I would call it versatile and very, very smooth.

Sea Wynde, a blend of rums from Jamaica and Guyana, is one of the new premium dark rums that apparently want to compete with single-barrel Scotch. It has a strong oak nose, with the strength (it is bottled at 92 proof) and caramel undertones of cask-aged whiskey, and a slightly smoky aftertaste. This rum is a different animal—strong and arresting.

(Most distillers have their own Web sites; a good introductory site with a great deal of information is www.rumshop.net.)

and can show well against its famous rivals. If Celebration's barrel-aged rums are not yet notable, they are promising, with deep, oaky scents and a slight smokiness. New Orleans has been waiting 150 years for its own rum, made with its own sugarcane, and it already has a very good one. It can wait a bit longer for a great one.

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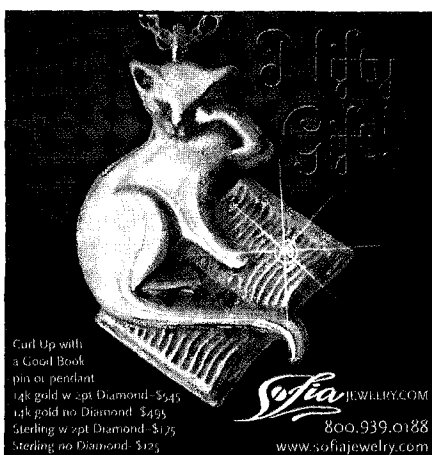
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BANANAS FOSTER

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Seldom can the origins of a dish be traced definitively. On the Southern Foodways Alliance field trip an afternoon was devoted to discussing why bread pudding is so closely associated with New Orleans. Two food historians gave talks, and two legendary African-American restaurateurs and businesswomen, Leah Chase and Willie Mae Seaton, offered very different examples of the dish—Chase's an elegant light custard with praline sauce, Seaton's dense and creamy.

Matters remained (tastily) unresolved. But the origins of bananas Foster, a dessert even more firmly linked to the city, pose no such problems. In 1946 Owen Brennan opened Brennan's, a restaurant that would launch a dynasty, and looked for signature dishes to compete with Antoine's and other well-established fine restaurants. In 1951 *Holiday* magazine asked him for a recipe, and Brennan offered a dessert created by his chef, Paul Blangé: bananas, brown sugar, and rum flambé over vanilla ice cream. New Orleans was then the country's port of entry for bananas, and the fortunes of rum were being revived. The dessert was named for a frequent customer, Richard Foster (who owned an awning company and also served on a city vice committee—one of doubtless dozens of efforts to bring order to the always picturesquely disheveled French Quarter). This was an era when tableside service at a restaurant brought high prices and gave an air of class, and chafing-dish pyrotechnics brought distinction to a hostess. They still impress guests. Once mastered, bananas Foster is easy and quick to assemble, with ingredients that are nearly always on hand.

What makes the dish good is the quality of the brown sugar and the rum. Louisiana raw sugar would be the most suitable, but it is hard to come by. Billington's muscovado sugar—made from Mauritius sugarcane, minimally processed and so richly flavored that, paradoxically, it tastes almost salty—would be an excellent alternative. As

for rum, Celebration's Cane is the natural choice. Use an ice cream with a very light vanilla flavor, to complement the rum's strong one.

I've adapted a recipe from the 1997 edition of *Joy of Cooking* (previous editions didn't include it), itself adapted from the Brennan's original. For four servings, peel four ripe but firm bananas, cut them in half lengthwise, and cut each half into four pieces. Melt two tablespoons of butter in a large and heavy skillet. Add the bananas, cut side down, and sauté over low heat for ten minutes, turning them once after five minutes. Off the heat sprinkle them with three tablespoons brown sugar, 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon, and 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg.

If you're unused to flaming, finish the sauce at the stove. Heat 1/2 cup rum in a small saucepan, over a low flame and away from flammable objects, until it is about to simmer (it will seem to be thinning, and a few trails of steam may rise from the surface). Tilting the pan away from you, hold a lit kitchen match well above the surface of the liquid; be prepared to snatch your hand away and to right the pan as the flames rise. Carefully pour the flaming liquid over the bananas and swirl with a flame-proof spatula or spoon, scraping up any brown bits. The flames will die down after a minute or so. Spoon the sauce over vanilla ice cream and serve.

The showy version calls for a chafing dish and long fireplace matches; but however you choose to assemble and serve the dish, practice making it before you try it on guests. You can transfer the banana-sugar mixture from the skillet to a chafing dish, working carefully to avoid breaking the bananas, and then carry the heated rum to the dining room and light it there before pouring it over the bananas. Or you can make the whole thing, start to finish, in a chafing dish, adding the rum directly to the cooked bananas and scraping the bottom of the dish as you wait for the rum to get hot enough for flaming. This is a more leisurely method, because everything takes much longer in a chafing dish. But leisure was a hallmark of the Old South, and perhaps somewhere in the Big Easy and beyond someone still has it. ■

Corby Kummer is a senior editor of The Atlantic.



THE PUZZLER

by EMILY COX and HENRY RATHVON

Alien Invasion

Apparently this puzzle has sustained an invasion of aliens—at least 11 of them. Infiltrating our diagram, they've made some cryptic rings whose pattern is identified by letters inside those rings, reading clockwise. Before flying off to who knows where, the visitors left us a parting word (the unclued central entry in the diagram) that may also be considered an example of such rings. Final diagram entries include 11 capitalized words.

Last month's Puzzler solution is on page 134.

ACROSS

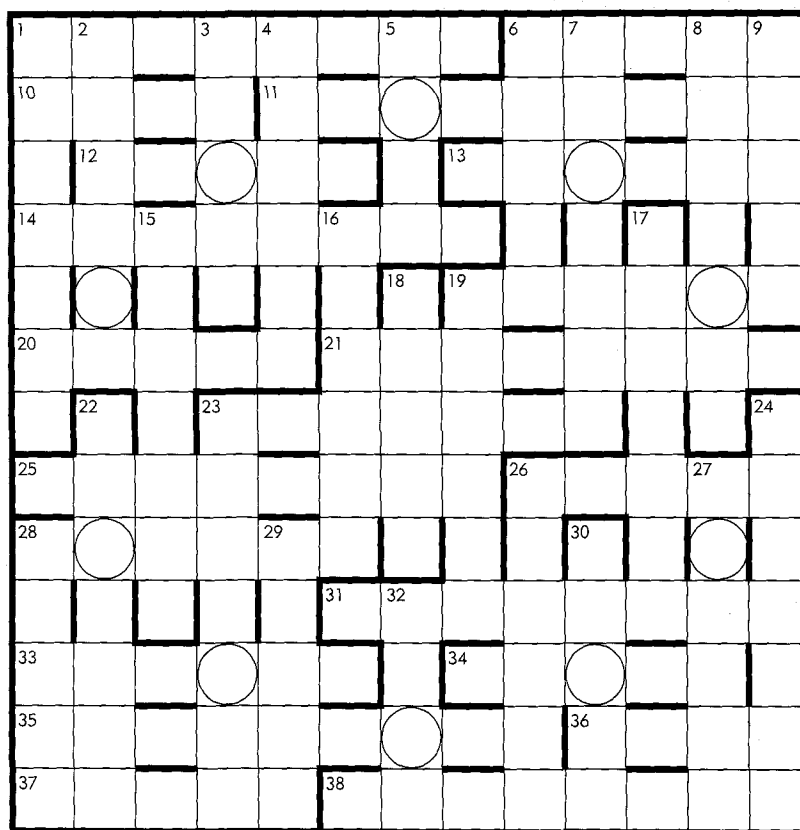
1. Glove material for one hundred alien's relatives (8)
6. Non-adults leading by one in gym (5)
10. Foreign auto commercial I set outside university (4)
11. Cheapskate's pinching cent for orchard laborers (7)
12. Live down by wet hole (5)
13. California's importing red jam ingredients? (4)
14. Opens up waterfront property around 1 (8)
19. Something fruity worn by Liberal philanthropist (6)
20. Theatrical award, mostly for style (3)
21. Where a driver may go in Ella's own convertible (4,4)
25. Film clip, after the first person who complains (6)
26. Drunk a dark port (5)
28. Rogues and cons taking in chief of police (6)
31. Funny about curve of outer space (6)
33. Howl interrupted by Rex's asinine sound (4)
34. Form of payment announced for store (5)
35. Vocal ruling is coming down (7)
36. Formerly held in detention center (4)
37. Awfully stern for a Dadaist (5)
38. Medical student heard one after another (6)

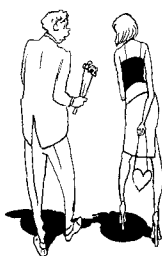
DOWN

1. Average Dadaist's complaints (5)
2. Hearing of a duel I arranged (6)
3. Discovery about Egypt's earliest demon (5)
4. Organ noticed outside of place (6)
5. Better after eliminating the first writer of sweet words? (4)
6. Quiet parade finally in step (5)
7. French painter's tour I'll reset (7)
8. Tune with a strong beat? (3,4)
9. Shrink goes topless in German city (5)
15. Last longer than a certain Latin speaker's stout? (7)
16. Education on small city trains and autos (6)
17. Pile of snow contains large empty space (5)
18. Flip undresses for rest in bed (5)

19. Railroad in Missouri is for an early U.S. statesman (6)
22. One dictating new E.R. creed (7)
23. Appeared right, like spy equipment (7)
24. Watson's partner, a pain in the neck (5)
26. Lady carrying silver is hurt (6)
27. Each fighter pilot eats some dessert (6)
28. Brit's weapon shot bears (5)
29. Real-estate map contains one fold (5)
30. Scenery in Oregon after December (5)
32. Norse god's love: thunder (4)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.





WORD FUGITIVES

by BARBARA WALLRAFF

In May a reader asked, "What is the word to describe the moment right before you are about to do something terribly stupid, when everything runs in slow motion?" Other readers, too, have need of such a word, as these examples of situations that cry out for one demonstrate.

David Noller, of Burbank, California, wrote, "I once was absentmindedly dangling my arm out the fully open window of my car—until a moment of awareness that lasted a millisecond before the automated car-wash nozzle began to fire at high velocity one foot from my face."

Jeanne Flavin, of New York City, reported that she "once slammed down the childproof cap onto a large bottle of Tylenol, catching the web of my hand between the lid and the bottle, with the lid in the locked position." She then "desperately searched for a way to pry it off, during which entire time the bottle of pills was shaking like a maraca."

And Henry Evans, D.M.D., of Chewelah, Washington, wrote, "As a young orderly, I once observed a physician accidentally squirt a large amount of antiseptic soap into a patient's eye, thinking he was using a sterile saline rinse. I knew before it happened that he was going to do it and that it was wrong, but it was too late to stop him or even to say anything."

For some reason, word fugitives about all sorts of things tend to elicit plays on *déjà vu*. This one was *déjà vu* all over again: several readers suggested *déjà rue* or *déjà fou*; Bill Parton, of Russellville, Arkansas, offered *déjàphooey*; and yet other readers proposed *déjà* expressions too impolite to print. A number of *Simpsons* fans also wrote in, invoking Homer's deathless *D'oh!* and variants thereof. A few readers blended the two concepts. For instance, Matt Breaden, of Lake Oswego, Oregon, wrote, "I am a longtime fan of *The*

Simpsons, and so the moment before doing something stupid I often feel a profound sense of *déjà d'oh*."

Suggestions that lack any particular cultural referents include *pregret*, submitted by many readers; *dunderstruck*, by Jon Miller, of New Haven, Connecticut; *slipupiphany*, by Kenneth Tishgart, of Ross, California; and, particularly to describe "a social blunder," *time-lapse faux pas-graphy*, by Paul Liversage, of Fargo, North Dakota.

All well and good, but Tim Sargent, of Keams Canyon, Arizona, takes top honors. He wrote, "An all-encompassing

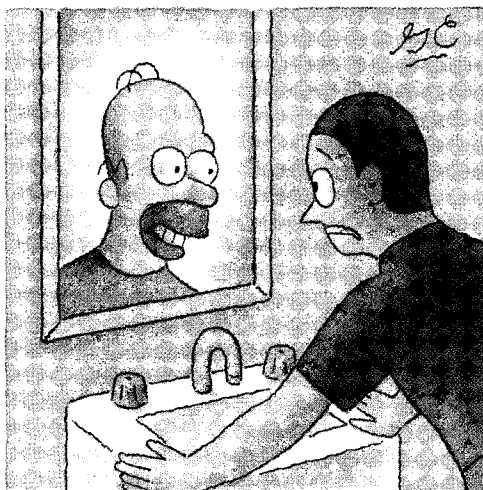
"The woman he seeks is a *femme mid-all*. Thanks for amusing me!"

The most popular coinages, submitted by members of both sexes, were *belle-curved* and *mediyum* or *mediyummy*. And here's a nice try that, alas, probably wouldn't get the point across: Jim Richards, of Rexburg, Idaho, suggested *nonplussed*.

It is impossible to deny David Olivett, of Emporium, Pennsylvania, top honors. He sent in a poem, explaining, "I could not think of a one-word adjective to aid Roger Wilson in his plight. However, he is free to use this bit of doggerel: 'While the violin is small and sleek, / And the double bass broad and mellow, / The one true love that I do seek / Should mostly resemble a cello.'"

Now LUELLA SCHMIDT, of Madison, Wisconsin, writes, "My husband and I have been searching for a term to describe the burned bit of skin on the roof of your mouth that you get when you fail to let your slice of pizza cool adequately."

And JANE EVANS, of Kingston, Washington, writes, "What is the word for the reflection of moonlight on water and the way it follows you exactly as you are walking down the beach or a dock?"



term for these moments of stopeless hupidity might be *instant regretification*."

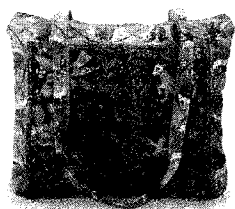
Another reader, Roger Wilson, requested help in wording a personal ad; he was looking for a "flattering" word to describe a female shape between "slender" and "full-figured." This elicited a bit of feminist commentary. Denise Mathew, of Charlottesville, Virginia, wrote, "I was sad to see that you printed Roger Wilson's awful query. Please tell him to try using the word *Barbie*." Most women who responded, however, took no offense. For instance, Anne Quigg, of Malden, Massachusetts, wrote, "My entry is *Our Bodies, Our 12s*." And Sharon Urquhart, of Graton, California, wrote,

Send words that meet Luella Schmidt's or Jane Evans's needs to *Word Fugitives*, The Atlantic Monthly, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, MA 02114, or visit the *Word Fugitives* page on our Web site, at www.theatlantic.com/fugitives. Submissions must be received by October 31. Use the same addresses to submit word fugitives that you'd like The Atlantic's help in finding. Letters become the property of *Word Fugitives* and may be edited.

Readers whose queries are published and those whose words are singled out for top honors will each receive, with our thanks, a selection of recent autographed books by Atlantic authors. The next installment's correspondents will be sent Thomas Jefferson, by Christopher Hitchens; Imperial Grunts, by Robert D. Kaplan; and 1491, by Charles C. Mann.

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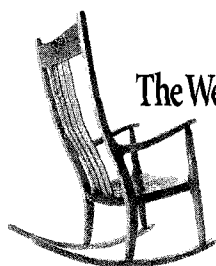
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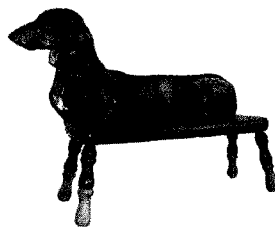
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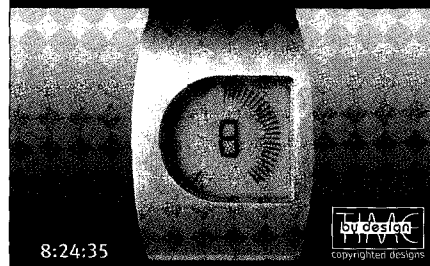


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Great Scott

James Montgomery Doohan (1920–2005)

BY MARK STEYN

Some men are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have great catchphrases said to them. James Montgomery Doohan is an honorary member of that last category. He was the guy who spent four decades on the receiving end of the request “Beam me up, Scotty”—if not on TV, where no character on *Star Trek* ever actually uttered those words, at least in real life, where fans would cheerfully bark the injunction across crowded airport concourses in distant lands, and rush-hour drivers would lurch across four lanes of freeway traffic to yell it out the window at him. Elvis is said to have greeted him with the phrase, and Groucho, too. There are novels called that, and cocktails. On Highway 375 to Area 51, in Nevada, you can stop at the Little A-Le-Inn and wash down your Alien Burger with a Beam Me Up, Scotty (Jim Beam, 7UP, and Scotch).

It wasn’t supposed to be the catchphrase from the show; that honor was reserved for Gene Roddenberry’s portentous, sonorous, orotund grandiosity—the space-the-final-frontier, boldly-going-where-no-man’s-gone-before stuff. The beaming was neither here nor there; it was a colloquialism for matter-energy transit or teleportation—or, more to the point, a way of getting from the inside of the spaceship to the set of a planet without having to do a lot of expensive exterior shots in which you’ve got to show the USS *Enterprise* landing and Kirk, Spock, et al. disembarking. Instead the crew would position themselves in what looked vaguely like a top-of-the-line shower and order Scotty to make with the beaming; next thing you knew, they would be standing beside some polystyrene rocks in front of a backcloth whose colors were the only way of telling this week’s planet from last week’s. “Beaming” was the special effect—the one that saved *Star Trek* from having to have any others.

Like all authentic pop-culture moments, the phrase was a happy accident. In September of 1966, in the first episode broadcast, they beamed without benefit of Scotty. He showed up in the third, beaming up a destroyed starship’s “space recorder”—that is, a trash can on legs. Would a beam by any other name—Bud, Nigel, Paddy, Miguel—have smelled as sweet? James Doohan was a Canadian of Irish stock, and as an old CBC radio actor he had a score of accents on tap. Which, he asked Gene Roddenberry, would they like? They left it to him, and because the character was an engineer and the Scots were the great engineers of the British Empire and certainly of Canada, he chose to make his character Scottish and give Mr. Scott his own middle name—Montgomery. A minor character somehow evolved into the de facto No. 3 on the *Enterprise*’s crew; and as the man responsible for nursing the spaceship through whatever cockamamie scheme Captain Kirk was minded to put into action, Scotty over time became the guardian and spirit of the *Enterprise* itself. “I cannae change the laws of physics for you!” he would protest, before gamely giving it a go.

Star Trek has famously devoted fans—Trekkies or Trekkers. If memory serves, the latter is the preferred term, though the former is the title of Roger Nygard’s full-length documentary on the phenomenon. But “Beam me up” long ago beamed itself off the *Enterprise* and into the wider world. As great never-spoken screen dialogue goes, it’s rivaled only by “Play it again, Sam”—and even “Play it again” hasn’t ever demonstrated quite the versatility of its rival. In *Every Man’s Battle: Winning the War on Sexual Temptation One Victory at a Time*, Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker suggest the phrase as a useful way to keep male appetites in check: if your wife were suddenly “beamed”

up into your motel room, would she approve of what you’re doing? Something to ponder before you buy the gal in the lobby bar that second margarita—or even press the “order” button on the adult-video channel.

On the other hand, Howard Markman, Ph.D., the head of the Center for Marital and Family Studies at the University of Denver, uses “Beam me up, Scotty” as shorthand for a classically uncommunicative male attitude toward spousal conflict. Weary of his wife’s incessant nagging, the husband rolls his eyes heavenward and murmurs, “Get me outta here, somebody.” The “Beam me up” approach will only make the wife even more enraged.

So “Beam me up, Scotty” can help your marriage or destroy it. You could wind up celebrating your anniversary dancing with your beloved to “Beam Me Up, Scotty,” by Tom Rush, or nursing the blues in that bar outside Area 51 staring into the bottom of your fifth Beam Me Up, Scotty. “This phrase works in almost any situation,” Dave Marinaccio writes in *All I Really Need to Know I Learned From Watching Star Trek*.

For example: You’ve forgotten your spouse’s anniversary. At the moment your spouse discovers your blunder, you simply say, ‘Beam me up, Scotty’... ‘Beam me up, Scotty’ is just a way of saying the world is beyond my control.”

Marinaccio argues that it’s a pithier version of “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change ...” and a less vulgar and stupid version of “Sh*t happens”—though this suggests a degree of fatalistic acceptance one would not associate with, say, the expelled Representative James Traficant’s frequent congressional deployments of the term:

“Mr. Speaker, today Congress will debate two bills. The first bill is partial-birth abortions. The second bill is wildlife and sport-fish restoration. Unbelievable. Kill the babies but save the trout and the titmouse. Beam me up. In fact, beam me up, Scotty.”

“Think about it. While sixty percent of taxpayer calls to the IRS go unanswered, the IRS agents were watching Marilyn Chambers do the Rotary International. Beam me up here. It



is time to lat fifteen percent
sales tax a this ga ling,
porno-vate and US complete

With the *Congressional Record* awash in "Beam me up, Scotty's," somebody eventually decided it was time for *Star Trek* to belatedly put the famous words in Captain Kirk's mouth. So after the best part of a quarter century he delivered them to his engineer in the fourth *Star Trek* movie. By then Scotty felt about Kirk the way Jim Traficant felt about IRS porn junkies. Jim Doohan never cared for William Shatner, the ranking Canadian on the bridge of the *Enterprise*, and would gladly have beamed him out for good. He was unable to flip Shatner the finger, because his middle digit had been shot off in the war, but he metaphorically gave it to him at every opportunity. At fan conventions Shatner would be backstage bemoaning the obsessiveness of Trekkies/Trekkers while Jimmy would be onstage cheerfully doing shtick at Shatner's expense. For instance, he'd attempt to beam Kirk up but only Kirk's toupee would materialize. Doohan aged better than most of the crew: in the nineties, avuncular, moustachioed, burly, and bleary, he looked more like a Scotty than he had in the sixties. Unlike many of his colleagues, he was at ease with the very

precise niche celebrity that *Star Trek* had brought him. It was a life, though far from the one he'd once known.

Conceived in Ireland and born in Vancouver, Doohan spent his childhood in Sarnia, Ontario, where his father was a dentist, a veterinarian, and an abusive drunk. After high school Jimmy enlisted in the Royal Canadian Artillery, and on D-Day he scrambled ashore at Juno Beach. He took eight bullets that day—four in the leg; three in the hand, costing him his finger; and one in the chest, which was stopped by a silver cigarette case—after which he spent the rest of the war with the Royal Canadian Air Force. As a result of D-Day they had to get a body double in for finger close-ups in *Star Trek*; but then again, it was a Scots officer who first gave him prolonged exposure to the accent that would make his fortune.

So an Irishman who fought with the Canadians against the Germans became a Scotsman who fought with the Americans against the Klingons. Doohan helped invent the Klingon language, and he got more credit for it than most kilted purists were willing to give him for his Scottyisms—"Have a bonny trip!," "That'll put the haggis in the fire," and other innovations yet to pass the lips of any pure-blooded haggis eater. But the obvious criticism of *Star Trek* is that its intergalactic lingo was *too* unchanged: in the episode in which Scotty makes his debut, another crew member lies in the sick bay and complains that Kirk is making him read all this "longhair" stuff. It seemed unlikely even then that "longhair" would have survived the centuries as a synonym for "intellectual," and Scotty's neologisms at least have the merit of being potentially spoken in the distant future.

Come to think of it, they're being spoken now. Last year a fellow in Florida

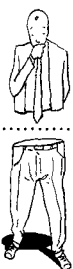
sent me an e-mail about Iran's nuclear program with the subject header "That'll put the haggis in the fire." Indeed, as the years went by, James Montgomery Doohan's fake Scots engineer became more real than most Scots and most engineers could ever hope to be. Awarded an honorary doctorate by the Milwaukee School of Engineering, he was amazed to discover that in a poll many of its students claimed to have been drawn to the field by Scotty's TV adventures.

Meanwhile, in memory of Doohan, the West Lothian Council wants to erect a plaque in Scotty's home town of Linlithgow—the first time a memorial has been put up in someone's birthplace 217 years before he was born. If, indeed, Scotty was born in Linlithgow. The Aberdeen councilor Pamela MacDonald claims he was born in her town, on Constitution Street, and the Elgin councilor Keith Sands and Lesley Hinds, the lord provost of Edinburgh, have staked claims on behalf of their own municipalities. While Doohan's ashes are to be fired into space and scattered among the stars, poor Scotty remains unbeamed and ensnared by the surly bonds of earthbound jurisdictions.

A beamer by nature as well as by trade, James Doohan was an easygoing working thesp content to be known as the all-time great beam-movie actor. There's a *Star Trek* convention somewhere or other every weekend, which means we'll be hearing "Beam me up, Scotty" on Earth for some decades yet. And as radio waves go on eternally bouncing around in space, hither and yon, right now in some distant galaxy some 1967 crew member is demanding that "Mr. Scott" (Captain Kirk's preferred formulation) beam him up, to the bemusement of any aliens within earshot. It's just a phrase; no author crafted it; but it grewed like Topsy, and the man to whom it's addressed will be beaming forever in reruns and among the stars. Play it again, Scotty. ♪

Mark Steyn is a columnist for Britain's *Telegraph Group*, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and other publications.

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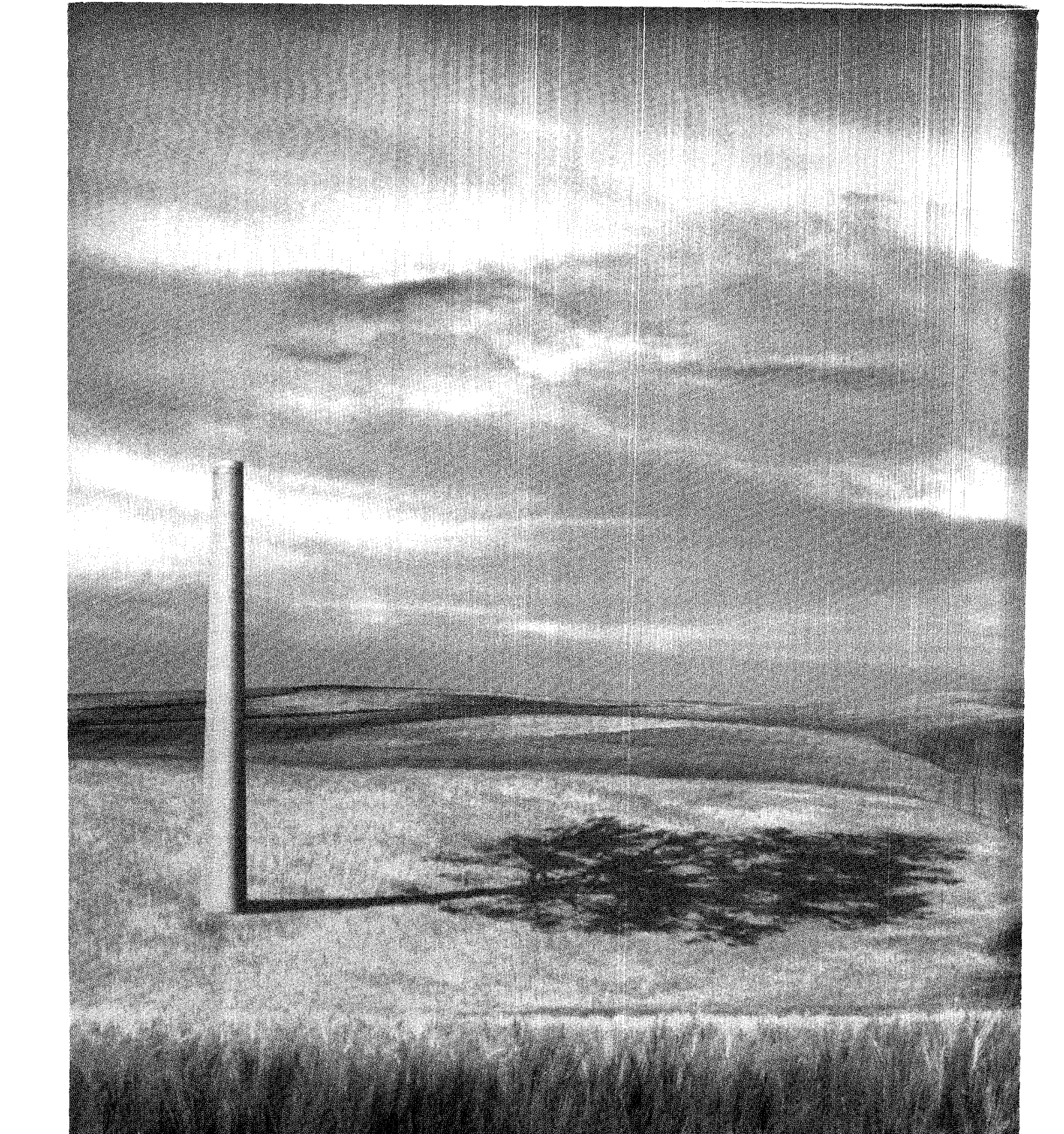
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